

# OTBG Meeting 7

11<sup>th</sup> January 2012. Defra 11:30 am – 2.00pm

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## 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Overseas Territories Biodiversity Group To be held at Nobel House

### Attendees:

Eric Blencowe (Defra)  
Jennifer Beschizza (Defra)  
Heather Christie (FCO)  
Kedell Worboys (UKOTA)  
Colin Clubbe (KEW)  
Bob Brown (JNCC)  
Christine Roehrer (Dfid)  
Tony Weighell (JNCC)

### 1 Matters arising

Action: TP to send (via KW) a request to OT governments for an official marine contacts list so that direct contact with OTs can be made re: Defra marine questions. Marine contacts are likely to be different in many cases to the official environment leads already identified.

Status: Ongoing; to be discussed end of research priorities group meeting this month

Action: TP to re-circulate HMG officials guidance paper for comment and prepare a final draft based on comments.

Status: Complete

Action: TP to draft and circulate to OTBG (and OT governments?) guidance paper for comment and prepare a final draft based on comments.

Status: Complete.

Action: TP to contact Kedrick Malone to clarify what the required action was and implement. Potentially an easy access guide to MEAs linking through to more detailed information (e.g. CBD ratification spreadsheet) as required.

Status: To be covered under separate agenda item.

Action: UKOTA to contact UK government officials if OT ministers are visiting UK to organise meetings with UK government ministers (e.g. Defra)

Status: Ongoing.

Action: TP to add MEA discussion to the next OT/CD Training and Research Group agenda

Status: Complete.

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## 2 Information items

Round the table updates

### DECC

At the OTCC (23 November) Greg Barker agreed to share lessons learned on Green Deal; we need to keep this commitment in mind and work with FCO.

Matthew Hodson is leaving post and his successor, Siobhan Stanger, will take over on the 20<sup>th</sup> January.

Looking into setting up a shared mailbox for DECC (similar to Defra UKOT enquiries inbox).

KW has previously had difficulty with getting in touch with specific people within DECC so would find it useful to have a central contact point.

KW planning to write from UKOTA to Defra and DECC ministers following OTCC to thank them for their attendance and for speaking at the OTCC.

### Defra

Defra unable to attend UKHO workshop due to clash with Darwin event.

Defra's response to pre-white paper exercise has received Ministerial approval and will be published very shortly. The paper includes a commitment to develop an implementation plan for the OTBS, which is something the NGOs were keen to see. Ministers have agreed this and we will work with Territories, the research priorities group etc. to move this forward.

OTs are popular with Ministers and they are keen to do more work on OTs in the future; Richard Benyon announced a commitment of £400,000 towards OT projects at OTCC and there may be more funding next year.

Marine and biodiversity teams are meeting tomorrow (12/01) to discuss where greater links can be established between teams.

### DFID

St Helena now has a new directorate of environment (headed by Tara Pelembe).

Preparatory work for St Helena's airport construction going ahead.

Over the past year the St Helena government has been supported in establishing a network of conservation areas. They are looking to have three national parks established in order to protect key natural resources. Now in final stages of discussion and conservation areas will be established by law and have legal protection.

OT climate change programme: FCO and DFID co-funding design consultancy to design ToRs. ToRs went out for limited invitation but only one offer was received. The ToRs will go out again on Thursday 12 January.

**ACTION:** All to forward through networks to ensure suitable distribution.

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## FCO

HC is moving posts at end of February (exact departure date not known). No replacement lined up yet.

Progress on OTEP projects: two mainstreaming projects on BVI and Falklands are well-under way with desk-based review going on now and workshops planned for February (BVI) / March (Falklands). People have so far responded negatively to the news about the changes in OTEP funding and this is most likely down to bad press. OTEP continues at the same budget, but the difference is now that we are working on the mainstreaming projects but all other past projects continue to be funded. There have been no cuts.

DFID are continuing with small projects scheme. Having a break in bidding this year but the money remains in place and rolled over, so larger bidding round next year.

KW agreed that there have been negative reactions to OTEP changes in the OTs but this is down to a misunderstanding of what's going on. Need to discuss further at the research priorities meeting how best to turn this around.

CC: the contact with Kew has had with its close collaborators was more of disappointment that the decision has been made to use OTEP funds in this way; they had become used to the fact that they could include OTEP funding in their project planning (as there are few funding opportunities for OTs as it is).

TW: JNCC is contributing funding to the projects. After initial uncertainties in the FI and BVI they are both now very happy with mainstreaming projects.

ACTION: All to consider which OTs may benefit from such projects in the future.

ACTION: EB & CR to discuss DFID's involvement in Darwin.

## JNCC

Interest in the OTs has grown and has reduced the need to attend as many meetings as JNCC used to in order to promote biodiversity work in the OTs. This is helpful given current staffing levels.

Replacement for Tara Pelembe not found yet.

JNCC approach is to be more strategic whilst still supporting small projects that are important to the OTs.

## Kew

Have launched the online herbarium as a major resource for OTs (was launched before Christmas) and will continue to populate with herbarium specimens. Getting very positive feedback from OTs. Phase 2 now started; shaping up an initial red list for all of the OTs which will allow them to feed in to strategic management of plant conservation.

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BB: could explore possibility of cross-fertilising with invertebrate red lists as well. Good opportunity to make links between data sets. Buglife are getting becoming more active and interested in the territories. This is where mainstreaming projects are most useful.

Kew staff will be visiting several OTs this year under various ongoing projects

Now have a UKOTs blog on Kew website.

ACTION: CC to send link to group.

Kew have an exhibition on at the moment on Joseph Hooker.

## UKOTA

Annual EU OCT forum is taking place in 2 weeks time. There will be a short session on environment and a presentation on climate change to be made by Dominique Benzaken of IUCN.

ACTION: KW to get in touch with CR about a sort session during the forum.

CC: Stuart McPherson, an independent natural historian / documentary maker, is visiting St Helena in February. Stuart has an interest in islands, and OTs particularly. As an independent film maker his next major project (which he has funding for) will be to visit all OTs in the course of the next 18 months with a view to producing a serious 'coffee table'-type publication on biodiversity in the OTs as well as a on them. His last project – lost world of the Guianas – was launched at the RGS in Sept 2011 and was very well-received. His work is pro-bono and will provide images for archive, free copies of books, CC may co-write the book, full involvement of all the OTs with full editing rights. He is doing terrestrial and marine.

Outcome: book an event at Royal Geographical Society.

EB raised idea of getting a Ministerial foreword for the book.

ACTION: CC to forward Stuart's proposal to Jennifer/Tony to circulate to the rest of the group.

## 3 Discussion/Decision

### OT Biodiversity Strategy implementation plan (Defra)

Ana Delgado has prepared a note setting out Defra's proposed research work which we are looking into and want to air at RP group. We are being careful to ensure that this does not cut across current work and it should also be something that has participation of OTs.

Top down approach addresses UK's global priorities but need to be careful when this meets the bottom up approach i.e. clashes with the OTs own priorities.

ACTION: Continue to refine this among OTBG. Aim to introduce it at the RP group for further discussion.

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CR suggested a mapping exercise would be a logical first step to determine the baseline.

At the moment it looks to top-down so need to present in a way that is beneficial to the territories.

## **OT White paper (FCO)**

HC: consultation on the strategy on the FCO website has now closed. Responses will be analysed. FCO are working with OGDs to finalise departmental papers, these should be finished by later this month and used to draft the environment section of the White Paper. The point to make about the white paper is that it is a snapshot of where we are on a longer journey, is not the end goal.

## **Marine framework (JNCC)**

Staffing levels have caused a slight delay in the process. The framework contains reference to the Aichi targets where possible. Also using current best practices in the OTs as much as possible. The document is limited to 50 pages and hope to have final document on the JNCC website by May.

TW: From OTBG looking for overall impression on scope of document, overall impression of detail (more / less needed?), obvious omissions, strengths / weaknesses, what else needs to be included (and tell TW where to find it)

ACTION: All to review the framework by no later than Friday 10 February.

In consulting the OT reps it would be best to get them in a room to discuss.

ACTION: KW to look for viable dates to do this.

## **MEA follow-up strategy (JNCC/All) and Anguilla Green Economy discussions (Defra)**

Richard Benyon met the Anguilla delegation following the OTCC. The Anguillians are looking for advice on developing a green economy. Work is ongoing to provide assistance.

Anguilla are also working on a challenge fund application for R19 of Darwin.

CR highlighted that Anguilla is an ODA-eligible territory, which may make it easier to find funding. They have succeeded in securing funding from the CDKN already.

ACTION: EB and CR to discuss further in a telephone call.

ACTION: EB and TW to discuss further Anguilla's Darwin bid.

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## **OT student Conference (Kew/UKOTA)**

The event will be held in September 2012 at Kew. The event will be jointly managed by Kew and UKOTA.

### **4. Any other Business**

JNCC raised the question of the next BEST round of funding and how the UK OTs might do better. There were no immediate suggestions as to actions but concern was expressed at the lack of success in the last round.

### **5. Presentation (Start approx 1.15pm)**

Mike Harley, AEA Technology– Climate change in OTs.

Dr Harley made a presentation on the use of a tool for assessing the risks to plant communities arising from climate change. This was based on an EU project which could be applied to the OTs. Colin Clubbe and TW agreed to consider how the tool might relate to ongoing work in the OTs.

