

OTBG Meeting 8

31 May 2012. Defra 11:00 am – 1.00pm

8th Meeting of the Overseas Territories Biodiversity Group Held at Nobel House

Report on meeting

Attendees – in person

Eric Blencowe, Defra
Sion Griffiths, FCO
Kedell Warboys, UKOTA
Colin Clubbe Kew
Jennifer Beschizza
Tony Weighell, JNCC

Attendees – phone

Sally Cunningham, Defra
Stacey Hughes, Defra
Tina Blandford, Defra
Christine Roeher, Dfid

Apologies

DECC

1. Agreement of the report of the last meeting, and matters arising

The report of the last meeting was agreed.

2. Information items – round the table summaries

Defra

- Defra would prepare a report on the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) meeting in Australia;
- The Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative (GOBI) is identifying ecologically or biologically significant areas (EBSAs) with an initial focus on areas beyond national jurisdiction including the Southern Indian Ocean as an initial area for attention. Some relevance to BIOT with this initiative;
- The South Georgia National Heritage Trust may be seeking assistance with conservation measures for historic buildings in SG. MoD may be asked to help with logistics.

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Dfid

- Dfid is managing a climate change review project to assess climate change priority issues in the OTs. Dfid updated the group on progress. The critical problem was establishing a credible list of stakeholders in the OTs to establish a credible understanding of baseline conditions, needs assessment and OT identified priorities. A meeting of the Steering Group would be held in the Summer, probably July.

UKOTA

- UKOTA raised the issue of how the UK OTs views would be represented at the Rio + 20 Summit and inclusion of OT delegates in the UK mission. There were no current plans to include OT reps in the UK delegation.
- A student workshop was planned for the Autumn and invitations were being sent out.

FCO

- The FCO told the group that reports on the two Environmental Mainstreaming pilot projects in the Falklands and BVI would shortly be available;
- Negotiations with two other OTs, Bermuda and the Cayman Islands, were in progress to apply the process in these OTs;
- UKOTA suggested that the results of these two pilots should be circulated widely and that key messages, stressing the benefits of the process, should be established;
- Dfid stressed that suggestions that OTEP funding had been permanently discontinued as a result of the mainstreaming work should be contradicted where possible;
- The FCO confirmed that the White Paper would be published by end June;
- The FCO hoped to have an agreed position on Rio + 20 UKOT attendance with FCO to publish a briefing.

Kew

- A new Director will soon be in post and the Science Audit report was about to be signed off;
- Kew was planning a BEST application for funding to support a climate change project in the Falkland Islands;
- TCI pine recovery project – first successful burn on TCI completed and MSc students will be used to evaluate results.

JNCC

- Confirmed that mainstreaming reports for the Falklands and BVI will be available within a week.

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3. Implementing the OT Biodiversity Strategy

Background (Defra)

The RSPB, along with the St Helena National Trust and Falklands Conservation, had approached Defra asking that the UK OT Biodiversity Strategy be used to set high level strategic priorities to underpin UK support for OT biodiversity work.

Implementation options (All)

The Group discussed how a process might be implemented which i. would pull together information that highlighted where UK Government and its agencies are working towards implementing the Strategy and ii. Involve the NGOs that had made representations to Defra.

JNCC agreed to scope such a process and report back to the next OTBG meeting

4. AOB

The next OTBG meeting would be held in late October 2012.