



Draft minutes

12th Meeting of The UK Biodiversity Research Advisory Group 9th December 2008

Location: Environment Centre Wales, Deiniol Road, Bangor, LL57 2UW.

In attendance: Peter Costigan (Defra, Chair) Tina Yates (JNCC, Secretariat) Helen Baker (JNCC – Biodiversity Research Manager) Tim Blackstock (CCW) Andy Brown (Natural England – Principal Ornithologist) Richard Evans (for Havard Prosser, WAG) Mary Gibby (Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh) Michel Kaiser (Bangor University – Marine Science) Pamela Kempton (NERC – Freshwater Science) Andrew Pullin (Environment Centre Wales) Paul Rose (JNCC – Head, Biodiversity Information Service) Shaun Russell (Director, Environment Centre Wales, guest, am only.) Hannah Toberman (Environment Centre Wales, observing) Kevin Watts (Forest Research)

Apologies: Mark Bailey (CEH) Sallie Bailey (Forestry) Ian Bainbridge (Scottish Government) Chris Baker (NERC) Richard Brand-Hardy (Defra) Mike Fay (Kew) Davy McCracken (SAC) David McDonald (Univ. of Oxford) Greg Mudge (SNH) Lloyd Peck (NERC) Mark Spencer (Nat History Museum) Allan Watt (CEH) Sarah Webster (Defra)

12.1 Welcome

Congratulations were given for Andy Stott on his new post as JNCC Director of Science, along with thanks for his work to date. Hope was expressed that he maintains contact and involvement with BRAG. Thanks were also given to the staff of the Environment Centre Wales for hosting the meeting.

The Chair welcomed Shaun Russell, Director of the Environment CentreWales, and Hannah Toberman, observing, of the Environment CentreWales.

12.2. Minutes of the 11th meeting (5th June 2008) and matters arising not otherwise on the agenda

12.2.1 No amendments to the minutes were received.

12.2.2 Progress on actions from the 11th meeting (5th June 2008)

Action Point No.	Description	Action	Progress
2.1	Secretariat to follow up non-responses from UK BRAG members for details of key contacts within their organisations, and report back to the next UK BRAG meeting.	Secretariat plus members	Ongoing – Secretariat setting up spreadsheet with responses to date, which will be circulated when complete. Initial use will be for circulation of brief annual report. Action: Secretariat to draft 1 or 2 page newsletter style annual report and investigate use of existing circulations, e.g. Biodiversity Partnership Newsletter.
2.2	Secretariat to follow up non-responses from UK BRAG members for a list of key contacts within their communities, and report back to the next UK BRAG meeting.	Secretariat plus members	
2.3	Secretariat to follow up non-responses from UK BRAG members for key decisions in developing strategies of their organisations and, where possible, big, cross-organisational initiatives (i.e. thinking beyond their own organisations). Secretariat will report at the next UK BRAG meeting.	Secretariat plus members	
2.4	Secretariat to produce a paper outlining the opportunities (timelines with key decision points) to inform and influence funders. This action depends on the actions above being complete. Secretariat will chase non-responses and report at the next UK BRAG meeting.	Secretariat	Action: Timetable of decisions to be standing agenda item.
2.5	Secretariat to access both the NERC and BBSRC peer-review college members' database, and contact those with biodiversity interest.	Secretariat	NERC database available on web, and has been accessed. BBSRC membership still to be investigated.
2.6	Crown Dependencies	Secretariat	Done – agenda item 2
3.1	Andrew Pullin to circulate information on web-based toolkits for guidance on information sources to increase the rigor of review.	Andrew Pullin	Done
4.1	Secretariat to look at BiodivERsA database at programme level and ensure it includes comprehensive information on biodiversity research programmes including contact details.	Secretariat	Secretariat registered on BiodivERsA web site. Problems with using site to be followed up.
5.1	Secretariat to add information about the BES Special Session to the UK BRAG website and all members to add information on this to their websites as appropriate.	Secretariat and UK BRAG members	Done

Action Point No.	Description	Action	Progress
6.1	Paul Rose to add paragraph at front of paper (BRAG 11/4) to clarify situation regarding role of UK BRAG in process of UK BAP habitats and species review. This to be done in conjunction with Wildlife and Countryside Link.	Paul Rose	Agenda item
6.2	Paul Rose to discuss mechanism for progressing the BAP review work with Sallie Bailey and Peter Costigan after the workshop report received	Paul Rose, Peter Costigan and Sallie Bailey	See agenda item 10.
10.1	Paul Rose and Andrew Pullin to discuss and clarify the links between the knowledge exchange paper (BRAG 11/2) and the policy relevant use of research paper (BRAG 11/10).	Paul Rose and Andrew Pullin	Agenda item
10.2	Secretariat and Tim Blackstock prepare a paper outlining the proposal for a UK BRAG contract on what characterises research that has moved biodiversity conservation forward for discussion at December UK BRAG meeting.	Secretariat and Tim Blackstock	Agenda item
12.1	Secretariat to circulate first draft of JNCC research agenda to UK BRAG when available.	Secretariat	Anticipated for early 2009
14.1	Andy Stott to prepare a brief paper identifying the issues for UK BRAG to discuss following Bill Sutherland's horizon scanning paper.	Andy Stott	Done – agenda item
14.2	Paul Rose and secretariat to prepare a draft response to the BBSRC consultation and circulate to UK BRAG for comments. Deadline: Draft to be circulated by 30 June 2008, responses to be sent to secretariat by 9 July 2008	Paul Rose and Secretariat	Done and submitted by deadline. No feedback.
AI - 1	JNCC secretariats for BRIG and BRAG to initiate and run the process outlined in Annex 1, for consideration and implementation of research, survey and monitoring actions proposed for the new list of BAP priority species and habitats.	BRIG and BRAG secretariats	Done – paper circulated and workshop held 4-5 December. Agenda item.

12.3. Outcomes of the Crown Dependencies (CDs) workshop Ref paper BRAG 12/1

12.3.1 A request was made to circulate the notes from the workshop (BRAG paper 12/1) to colleagues in Defra.

Action: Secretariat to check status of the JNCC Crown Dependencies Workshop summary paper to see if it can be circulated more widely.

12.3.2 There was general consensus that BRAG needs to think more strategically about biodiversity and Island issues, and that it would be useful know how biodiversity legislation works in the CDs. As an example it was stated that the Isle of Man is not compelled to follow EU legislation, but that it does so to facilitate trading within the EU. It was also thought that while Gibraltar does have to follow EU directives, the Channel Islands are not similarly constrained. It would be useful to have a reference table showing how international and EU biodiversity laws relate to the CDs.

Action: Secretariat to invite JNCC Overseas Territories Officer (Tara Pelembe) to next meeting, to talk in more detail about the Crown Dependencies work, with a request for her to provide an advance paper about the JNCC role

12.3.3 There was a suggestion that UK BRAG could do a study on the research needs of Islands with reference to biodiversity; it was agreed to consider this more fully at the next meeting after speaking with the JNCC Overseas Territories Officer. It was noted that some of the NGOs, e.g. RSPB, have expertise in island biodiversity and may wish to contribute to a BRAG review, if taken forward.

12.4. UK BRAG collaboration with the British Ecological Society – review of Ecosystem Services session (4 Sept 2008) and discussion of future collaborative events. Ref paper BRAG 12/2

12.4.1 There had been very positive feedback of the special joint BES/BRAG session at the 2008 BES September meeting. The session had been very well attended, by over 70 people, and had concluded with a good discussion session. At the subsequent BES policy meeting it had been agreed that the BES was happy to be engaged in this way, and that another joint BES/BRAG session at the September 2009 meeting would be welcomed.

12.4.2 BRAG discussion centred over what to do for the next time; a similar workshop approach was generally favoured. The timing of the topic of Ecosystem Services at the Sept. 2008 session had been particularly good, and there is a need to anticipate what is coming up in the future, while at the same time not duplicating what others may be doing. Reference was made to NERC letting contracts on valuing biodiversity, which are due to report in March 2009, and to the fact that CEH is working with the Institute of Biology on a workshop in April 2009.

12.4.3 One of the strengths of the BES meeting is that it is partly an education tool. Taking an interdisciplinary approach had been particularly useful at the 2008 meeting, and bringing in policy views not normally discussed could be of value to the scientific ecological community at the 2009 meeting. Mention was made of the RELU conference on 4th June 2009, and of the fact that

Landscape Ecology brings in social scientists and is the level at which ecosystem services is delivered. This was suggested as a potential follow up theme for 2009. The lack of a marine equivalent of RELU was noted as a serious missed opportunity. By next September work from NERC on landscapes will be coming forward, as will work from Defra on connectivity, so a landscape theme could be timely.

- 12.4.4 Another suggestion was to include more of a forward look from BRAG, with an interactive session asking people what they think BRAG should be making its priorities. It will be difficult for people to think “off the cuff” so something like this would need good advance publicity.

For the BES, the benefit of such special sessions is to stimulate new ways of thinking, so they will be happy for BRAG to take the lead in suggesting a topic. For BRAG the meeting is a very good way of publicising its work and raising its profile.

Action: TY, PC, AP and MK (for the marine connection) to progress ideas for a joint BES/BRAG workshop in autumn 2009 with Ceri Margerison and Dan Osborn of the BES Public and Policy Committee. TY liaise with Ceri to organise a meeting early in 2009.

12.5. Horizon Scanning, Ref papers BRAG 12/3a,b, knowledge exchange and report from Policy / Research Barriers sub-group

- 12.5.1 There was discussion on the papers, with a consensus that actions need to be appropriate to the potential risk anticipated, and that the key issues need to be prioritised. Nanotechnologies were considered the highest priority of the emerging threats. Both NERC and EPSRC have nano-science programs. EPSRC have agreed that work is needed to take into account environmental aspects of nanotechnology.

Action: all BRAG members with any ideas for EPSRC on environmental aspects of nanotechnology that need research please pass to Pamela Kempton.

- 12.5.2 LWEC Partners are due to meet to discuss their 4th objective (To protect human, plant and animal health by predicting how diseases, pests, hazards and other environmental factors will alter under forthcoming environmental change scenarios, assessing which sectors of society are most at risk and determining what management actions need to be taken.) BRAG needs to find out what is not being considered: a high level sift of current projects, to identify gaps, is needed. It would be useful to have a list of current policies impacted by each of the items in the paper, ‘Future novel threats and opportunities facing UK biodiversity identified by horizon scanning’ (Sutherland *et al*, (2008) Journal of Applied Ecology).

Action: PC & TY ensure horizon scanning people in different Defra teams aware of paper, and have help in interpretation of policy, and all BRAG members to circulate to their own horizon scanning people.

12.5.3 Andrew Pullin and Paul Rose tabled a paper “What is BRAG for?” (see Appendix I) revisiting how BRAG works and what it should do to increase the input of science into policy and to identify knowledge gaps. Key is being able to recommend to funders what needs to be done and the way in which it needs to be done. The aim of the sub-group is to try to identify how research funders make choices on information requirements for policy development in response to identification of knowledge needs and science questions. A major problem is the lack of incentives for researchers to engage with policy.; reviews need to be publishable, and some of the top journals are now publishing systematic reviews e.g. Biological Conservation. Academics are still not good at converting research into policy information that can be used; research that has definite applications is what is needed.

Action: Peter Costigan and Andrew Pullin to put together a new document about Knowledge Exchange / Knowledge Transfer

- 12.5.4 The Collaboration for Environmental Evidence (see www.environmentalevidence.org) has an open access library on reviews that have been done. Andrew Pullin gave a brief overview of the web site and pointed out that BRAG members can get involved in reviewing.
- 12.5.5 Suggestions were that a BRAG paper was needed on what research needs have been identified by the most recent BAP prioritisation exercise (see item 9). BRAG’s role is not to look at individual HAP and SAPs, but to identify in broad terms what is needed to deliver the BAP. The structure of BAP delivery has changed since the 100 questions event.
- 12.5.6 There were several limitations with the 100 questions exercise; it was focused on biodiversity with limited regard to policy and economics. As the focus of BRAG differs from the focus of the 100 questions paper, there may be value in BRAG also doing a similar exercise from a policy perspective; the outcome could include a list of systematic reviews.
- 12.5.7 BRAG influence on funders is probably most effectively done via researchers. NERC is one of the biggest funders via its responsive mode, but it is difficult for BRAG to directly influence NERC. It would be possible for BRAG to provide material to researchers to allow them to better argue a case for responsive mode funding; this may have a higher probability of success than trying to persuade NERC to fund a new biodiversity program. It is important that BRAG is recognised as a group to consult, and not as a group who are simply saying what other people are already saying.

12.5.8 A way forward may be if one aspect of LWEC can be funding systematic reviews; they are relatively cheap in terms of overall research funding, but they must be policy relevant to have impact.

Action: Pamela Kempton and Peter Costigan consider the mechanism of feeding BRAG issues into LWEC Partners' Board (next one due in week beginning 15 Dec 2008).

Action: Policy / Research Barriers sub-group to consider the benefits of a review of the 100 questions and BAP research needs in the context of socio-economic drivers and policy needs, and if appropriate develop a scope for such a review.

12.6. The Welsh Environment Hub – Presentation by Director, Shaun Russell

See Appendix 2 for text from presentation.

12.6.1 The Welsh Environment Hub has only been established for a few months. It is based in the Environment Centre Wales building, which is itself a partnership between the University of Bangor and CEH.

12.6.2 The Welsh Environment Hub is intended to have a similar function to the ERFF (Environment Research Funders' Forum) and SNIFFER (Scotland and Northern Ireland Forum for Environmental Research), in that it provides information about existing and planned environmental research in Wales, and acts to identify areas of synergy where joint activities and sharing of resources would provide added value, also promoting greater networking and sharing of information. Funding provision is £450 k over 3 years, from WAG, CCW, EA, and FC, with NERC (CEH) providing support in kind. There are 3 members of staff (one is part time).

12.6.3 The services provided by the Welsh Environment Hub include a database of environmental research, a website (www.werh.org), newsletter, and themed reviews and reports. The contact e-mailing address is: info@werh.org

12.7. House of Lords report on Systematics and Taxonomy and the Government's response Ref. papers BRAG 12/4a, b, c, d

12.7.1 It was felt to be a missed opportunity on the part of the House of Lords that input to the report was only requested from England organisations.

12.7.2 With reference to BRAG paper 12c (House of Lords Systematics and Taxonomy follow up, chapter 7, Conclusions and Recommendations) paragraphs 7.16 & 7.20 specifically refer to BRAG as follows;

HoL para 7.16 The Committee is concerned about lack of co-ordination of barcoding effort nationally and about the potential for duplication of effort. The efficiency of barcoding as a diagnostic technique increases in proportion to the number of different species barcodes available for comparison. In the case of plant pathogenic fungi, we recommend that UK Biodiversity Research Advisory Group (UK BRAG) addresses the task of how best to co-ordinate barcoding effort across the UK.

HoL para 7.20 We recommend the establishment of a new process for commissioning the production of identification keys and field guides, involving joint actions between users setting priorities, funders supporting fixed-term appointments, host institutions providing access to collections and literature resources, and established series publishers producing the volumes. We also recommend that UK BRAG should explore the options for commissioning the production of new and updated identification guides for the UK fauna and flora.

12.7.3 To respond, BRAG needs to develop advice to the UK Biodiversity Partnership Standing Committee (UKSC), drawing on expertise within member organisations, which can then form the basis of a response to the select committee. Such advice should clarify where the House of Lords recommendations are beyond the BRAG terms of reference (e.g. BRAG does not commission or fund work).

12.7.4 With respect to para 7.20 of the HoL report, there are learned societies already doing this, and it is not something that would be valued as an activity for an academic. There could be a value in discussion with OpAL (open air learning).

Action; MG & TB (with help from the Secretariat) to convene a workshop to develop advice for the UKBAP-SC on the conclusions of the HoL Systematics and Taxonomy review (inviting contributions from others, such as Forestry Research, CSL, HRI Wellesbourne, & Rothamstead).

12.8. GBSC update ref paper BRAG 12/5

12.8.1 There is to be a JNCC workshop next spring to look at what is coming out of the MEA processes, with the aim of helping improve synergy in responses. ERF has commissioned a review of GECC which should be complete in January 2009 and reported to the March GECC meeting. The review will present various options for the future of GECC, but early indications are that GBSC is considered successful and valued within the community.

12.8.2 Vin Fleming from JNCC has been tasked with setting up a sub-group on Arctic biodiversity, to include people beyond GBSC. The idea is that this group will report to GBSC in future.

Action: HB to put PK in touch with Vin Fleming.

12.9. BRIG – BRAG Ref paper BRAG 12/6

12.9.1 A workshop was held 4/5 December 2008 to prioritise species research and one-off survey needs from the BAP review; it was facilitated by an independent contractor and was well attended by the invitees (see paper). Attendees were tasked with validating the criteria for a prioritisation list, and undertaking prioritisation for their taxonomic groups. They were also asked to come up with meaningful groupings to take forward. The outcomes of the workshop will be reported in mid January, and will come back to BRAG and then go to the UKSC. Defra has set aside some funds to look at the biodiversity information gap (NE is handling this on behalf of Defra).

12.9.2 The workshop was seen as a successful way of working, even though it was a novel approach. It may be possible to use information from specialist habitat groups to look at top down questions.

12.9.3 It would be useful to have a BRAG event to be informed *inter alia* by the workshop and the report that comes out. Such an event will need to be very well facilitated with a lot of work prior to the event.

Action: AP & PR to establish a sub-group to receive the BRIG-BRAG BAP research needs report and decide on a way forward [interest expressed by MK, AB, TB, KW and MG].

12.10. EPBRS ref paper BRAG 12/7

12.10.1 Phone report from Allan Watt

The note of the last meeting of the EPBRS steering committee had been circulated (ref paper BRAG 12/7). EPBRS was represented at the establishment meeting of IPBES (the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services). Reports were given on BioStrat and DIVERSITAS. There is a proposal for joint work between EPBRS and DIVERSITAS in future. The May 2009 meeting is to be held in the Czech Republic with e-conference beforehand.

Action: PK to contact Allan Watt about using NERC in the EPBRS survey.

12.10.2 The steering committee meeting was followed by a full EPBRS meeting at which the UK was represented.

Action: Secretariat to send note round to UK BRAG members about when next e-conference to start (contact Allan Watt).

12.11. Update on JNCC research agenda

12.11.1 HB brought the group up to date with aims and progress so far. The data base of research topics is being cleaned at the moment, and from this the highest priority research for JNCC will be identified. Once completed the Research Agenda is intended to be used as an influencing document. The intention is to send it out to peer review early in 2009; BRAG input to this peer review will be sought. The aim is to launch the Research Agenda next spring.

12.12. Effective Research Sub-group

12.12.1 There was an oral report from Tim Blackstock. The BRAG concern is to ensure that we have the best information on which to base advice on research needs. At the moment there are all sorts of gaps in knowledge:

- Recording – is classification up to the job; should recording be intervention-linked; what role should remote sensing have?
- Analysis – should it be more systematic?
- Temporal issues - what are the ideal repeats for assessment and reporting, e.g. is the BAP three year formal reporting process too short a time scale and does it actually hinder action, or is it the case that by the time change is seen it's already too late?
- Modelling – is habitat or landscape modelling a good approach and what should our strategy be to get the most appropriate analyses?
- Prediction – what role does prediction have in influencing action; what are the best ways to develop scenarios and how do we use them?
- Genetic studies – is there really value in conserving small populations with an impoverished genetic pool? Inbreeding depression is talked about, but we need evidence if it is happening.
- Meta-populations – how do landscapes influence conservation, etc?

Action; MG to send the plant genetics website url to TJY

12.12.2 We need to think about what comes next after countryside survey – a think piece would be useful from BRAG.

Action: Tim Blackstock to do first draft of a paper on outstanding knowledge gaps and send to TY for circulation.

12.13. AoB,

12.13.1 BiodivERsA: The outcome from the BiodivERsA call under the EU's Sixth Framework Programme is now known. This was open to partner countries of the BiodivERsA ERA-net. €15M are going into funding 11 projects; the UK is a partner on 10 of the 11 projects with French and German funding going into some of UK partnerships (see <http://www.eurobiodiversa.org/>). The hope is that most projects will be starting in the New Year.

12.13.2 BRAG membership: There was discussion and agreement that BBSRC should be invited to join BRAG.

Action: PC to invite a BBSRC representative to come to BRAG. Contact details to be given to TY.

Action: TY to check that Scott Matthieson from SEPA is already a member.

12.13.3 Next meeting: provisionally set for 23 June, in London.

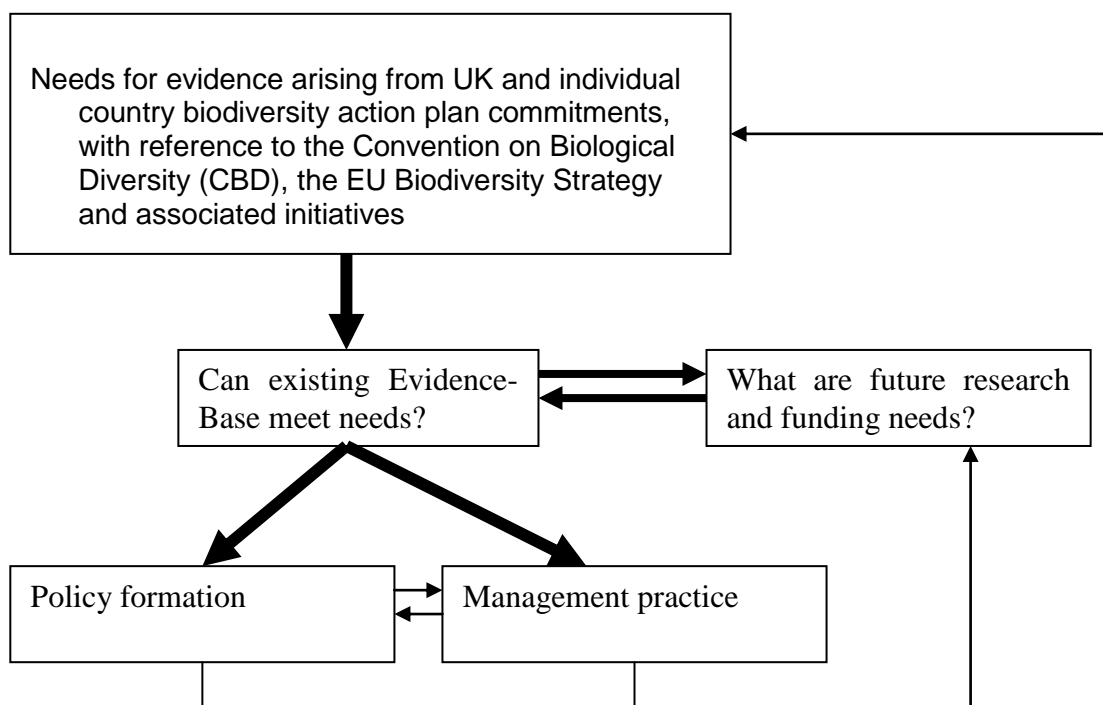
Summary of Action points from the 12th Meeting of UK BRAG

Ref in minutes	Description	Action	Progress
12.2.2	Secretariat to draft 1 or 2 page newsletter style annual report and investigate use of existing circulations, e.g. Biodiversity Partnership Newsletter.	Secretariat; all	
12.3.1	Check status of the JNCC Crown Dependencies Workshop summary paper to see if it can be circulated more widely.	Secretariat	Done.
12.3.2	Secretariat to invite JNCC Overseas Territories Officer (Tara Pelembe) to next meeting, to talk in more detail about the Crown Dependencies work, with a request for her to provide an advance paper about the JNCC role	Secretariat	Done
12.4.4	Liaise with Ceri Margerison and Dan Osborn of BES Public and Policy Committee to organise a meeting early in 2009. to progress ideas for a joint BES/BRAG workshop in autumn 2009.	Secretariat, PC, AP and MK (for the marine connection)	Meeting arranged for 26 Feb 09.
12.5.1	Ideas for EPSRC on environmental aspects of nanotechnology that need research to be passed to Pamela Kempton.	All members	
12.5.2	Ensure horizon scanning people in different Defra teams are aware of paper, 'Future novel threats and opportunities facing UK biodiversity identified by horizon scanning' (Sutherland <i>et al</i> , (2008) Journal of Applied Ecology). and have help in interpretation of policy; all BRAG members to circulate to their own horizon scanning people.	PC, TY, all members	
12.5.3	Draft a new document about Knowledge Exchange / Knowledge Transfer	Peter Costigan and Andrew Pullin	
12.5.8	Consider the mechanism of feeding BRAG issues into LWEC Partners' Board (next one due in week beginning 15 Dec 2008).	Pamela Kempton and Peter Costigan	
12.5.8	Consider the benefits of a review of the 100 questions and BAP research needs in the context of socio-economic drivers and policy needs, and if appropriate develop a scope for such a review.	Policy / Research Barriers sub-group	

Ref in minutes	Description	Action	Progress
12.7.4	Convene a workshop to develop advice for the UKBAP-SC on the conclusions of the HoL Systematics and Taxonomy review (inviting contributions from others, such as Forestry Research, CSL, HRI Wellesbourne, & Rothamstead).	MG & TB (with help from the Secretariat)	
12.8.2	PK to be put in touch with Vin Fleming at JNCC (who has been tasked with setting up a group on Arctic biodiversity)	HB	
12.9.3	Establish a sub-group to receive the BRIG-BRAG BAP research needs report and decide on a way forward	AP & PR [interest expressed by MK, AB, TB, KW and MG].	
12.10.1	Allan Watt to be contacted about using NERC in the EPBRS survey.	PK	
12.10.2	UK BRAG members to be notified as to when next EPBRS e-conference to start.	Secretariat to contact Allan Watt.	
12.11.1; 12.2.2	Secretariat to circulate first draft of JNCC research agenda to UK BRAG when available.	Secretariat	
12.12.1	Plant genetics website url to be sent to Secretariat.	MG	
12.12.2	Tim Blackstock to do first draft of a paper on outstanding knowledge gaps and send to TY for circulation.	Tim Blackstock	
12.13.2	A BBSRC representative to be invited to come to BRAG. Contact details to be given to TY. Check that Scott Matthieson from SEPA is already a UKBRAG member, on the circulation list.	PC, TY.	
12.13.3	Next meeting to be organised for 23 June (provisionally) in London	Secretariat	

What is BRAG for?

Given BRAG’s Terms of Reference, this simple diagram illustrates the links and key tasks (see below) to identify research that would inform policy development relevant to the UK BAP and related commitments.



KEY ACTIONS FOR BRAG

1. Identify science questions (through stakeholder consultation), the answers to which would assist with the implementation of the UK BAP etc.
2. Disseminate need and lever funding to characterise evidence base through systematic review (and related analyses) – to what extent can we already answer these questions?
3. Identify research needs arising from 2. – what are the gaps in the evidence base?
4. Promote and facilitate relevant research – ATTRACT RESEARCH FUNDING
5. Disseminate evidence base – ACHIEVE EFFECTIVE USE OF SCIENCE

Andrew Pullin
9th Dec 2008

Appendix 2 – Shaun Russell presentation, Wales Environment Research Hub.

Agenda item 6.

1.



Wales Environment Research Hub,

Dr Shaun Russell, Director

2.

WERH is located in the Environment Centre Wales building in Bangor

ECW is a partnership between the NERC Centre for Ecology and Hydrology and Bangor University, bringing together in a single space, 120 environmental scientists working across traditional boundaries.

3.

Building officially opened by Prime Minister Gordon Brown on 15th February, 2008

4.

Principal Environmental Issues in Wales according to the Wales Environment Strategy;

- Climate change
- Unsustainable resource use
- Degraded ecosystems
- Loss of landscape and heritage quality and distinctiveness
- Loss of Biodiversity
- Environmental hazards
- Poor quality living environments

5.

To enhance the evidence base for environmental decision-making in Wales, the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) has established the Wales Environment Research Hub, which will provide:

- a “one-stop-shop” for information about existing and planned environmental research in Wales

- a promoter of greater information-sharing and collaboration between researchers and policy-makers in support of the needs of the Wales Environment Strategy

6.

Hub funding - £450,000 over three years

Funders	%
WAG (DESH+DET)	65
CCW	20
Environment Agency	10
Forestry Commission	5
	100
NERC (CEH) in kind (e.g. infrastructure, IT); Bangor Univ. (e.g. financial admin, HR)	+10

7.

Director – Dr Shaun Russell

Research Officer – Dr Hannah Toberman

Admin Assistant – Lindsey Rogers

8.

THE HUB WILL:

- Establish links with the existing network of participants in Welsh research and monitoring, and map their research activities

- Review research needs of The Wales Environment Strategy and longer term needs, and identify priorities for future research and monitoring in support of policy making and implementation

- Identify areas of synergy where joint activities and sharing of resources would be of benefit and provide added value, and strengthen links between research groups within Wales to enhance inter- and multi-disciplinary research and monitoring of international quality

- Increase the leverage of research money into Wales and improve the performance of the environmental research sector by exploiting our unique coverage of terrestrial, freshwater and marine systems
- Provide a focal point for disseminating environmental information, including information regarding expertise and infrastructure for environmental science in Wales
- Provide support for the development of sustainable environmental goods and services via dissemination of information

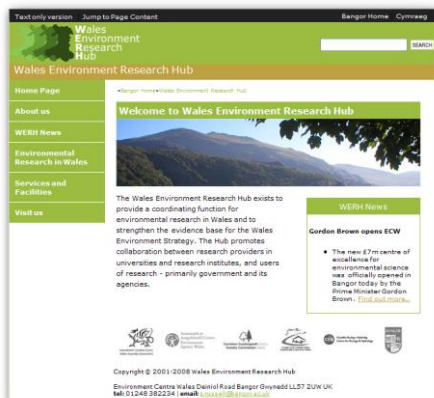
10.

Hub products and services:

- Databases of environmental research programmes, organisations and funding sources
- Website and newsletter to update on what's going on in the environmental research field in Wales
- Themed Reviews and Reports
- Workshop and conference facilities
- “Hot-desking” space for research attachments and secondments in North Wales*

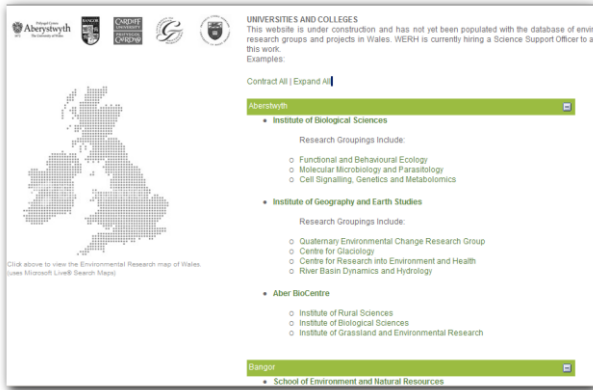
*Subject to Hub Steering Board prioritisation

11.



www.werh.org

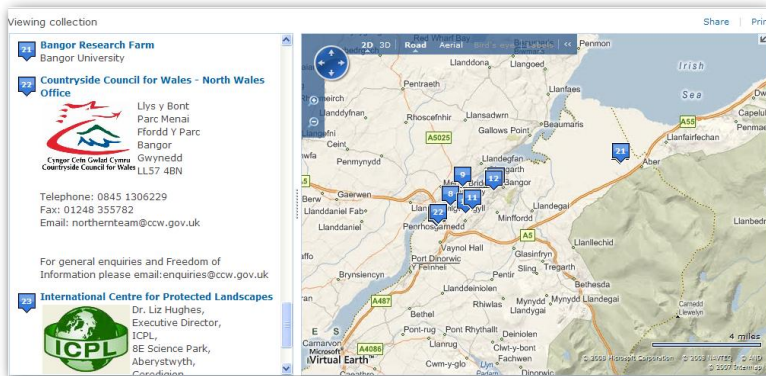
12.



13.



14.



15. Facilities

16. First Hub “event”:

FUTURE PROOF: IS ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING IN WALES “FIT FOR PURPOSE”

A WORKSHOP ON POLICY AND PRACTICE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING IN WALES.

VENUE: ENVIRONMENT CENTRE WALES, BANGOR, 30TH - 31ST OCTOBER 2008.

17. Second “event” jointly hosted by the Hub and the Centre for Integrated Research on the Rural Environment (CIRRE – Bangor/Aberystwyth):

Environmental Research into Policy Forum –

Strategy conference for researchers and policy-makers on the direction of environmental research in Wales.

Millennium Centre, Cardiff,

January 27th 2009

18. First Hub “commission”:

Review of research needs for the Wales Environment Strategy and Action Plan.

19. Second Hub “commission”

Listing of Biodiversity research in Wales

Universities and NGOs have been covered so far. Work is progressing on biodiversity studies being undertaken by governmental agencies, e.g: CCW, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, local authorities, National Parks, etc, and the private sector (e.g. environmental consultants).

20. Wales Environment Strategy - Action Plan 2

- Biodiversity
- Marine
- Access & Recreation
- Flood and water management
- Ecosystems services
- Research and Evidence

- The historic environment
 - People and the environment
 - Partnership
 - Environmental Quality
-
- “WAG to prepare a comprehensive statement as to the manner in which it and its partners have had regard to the conservation of biodiversity in achieving the actions under this Action Plan.”

21. For further information on the Wales Environment Research Hub, please view our website:

www.werh.org

or contact: info@werh.org