



**JOINT NATURE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE INTERSESSIONAL PAPER**

**UPDATE - JNCC ENGAGEMENT WITH INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE-POLICY INITIATIVES**

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## JOINT NATURE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

### UPDATE - JNCC ENGAGEMENT WITH INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE-POLICY INITIATIVES

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#### 1. Background

1.1. The science policy interface is a complex landscape of interactions between science and policy that works at all geographic scales and is facilitated by many existing processes and institutions. In December 2009, Chief Scientists Group (CSG) and Joint Committee received a paper on the future objectives and priorities for JNCC engagement with initiatives that contribute to the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services in Europe and globally. Both groups welcomed the proposals for work and asked for a regular written update. This paper is the first update on JNCC's progress with the work. A summary of progress is followed by more detailed achievements for each area of JNCC's work in Annex 1.

#### 2. JNCC objectives and added value role

2.1. JNCC, and others, have recognised that it is becomingly increasingly difficult to provide scientific evidence efficiently and in the most appropriate format to best support important European and global conservation decisions and policy. Each process, organisation or initiative often has its own science advisory mechanisms and sometimes a further proliferation of initiatives supporting or working alongside the science advisory bodies. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment was a major step forward in providing a single, policy relevant, global baseline for the state of the environment, that is now being repeated at many other scales (e.g. within the UK and Europe). However, there is still no mechanism for providing a single source of scientific advice for biodiversity in the same way that the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC<sup>1</sup>) does for Climate Change. This is the overarching coordinating and advisory role that the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) aims to fill for biodiversity, if established.

2.2. By supporting initiatives that look to streamline and improve the international science policy interface, such as IPBES, JNCC aims to achieve an improvement in the quality, quantity, consistency and relevance of scientific evidence used to inform European and global decision taking. If this is achieved, it will ensure that European and global contributions to national implementation of biodiversity strategies and conservation, are more focussed and underpinned by Science. There would also be a streamlining of the process through which science is produced that would:

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<sup>1</sup> Annex 2 contains a glossary of acronyms used in this document.

- i. make engagement by UK governments, agencies, NGOs and scientists easier;
- ii. reduce time spent coordinating and negotiating;
- iii. increase the flow of evidence; and,
- iv. provide more opportunities for national science and best practice to feed into and, hence influence, policy relevant assessments used to advise European and Global decisions/policy.

2.3. Beneficiaries of the improvements to the European and global science policy interface are likely to include all involved in conservation implementation and biodiversity policy development but especially the organisations contributing to European or international scientific assessments, through reporting, or other means, and those involved in representing the UK in European or global negotiations. JNCC largely achieves its objectives for improving the international science policy interface through other work areas on reporting, data access, surveillance, European coordination, advice on international conventions, climate change advice etc so only a modest resource is needed to coordinate the work on the international science policy interface and to engage directly at the planning and strategy level.

### 3. Summary of work undertaken

3.1. JNCC has concentrated on two major elements of work since December 2009:

- i. Moving IPBES into a position whereby it can be established at the third and final negotiating meeting in June 2010;
- ii. Establishing UK positions and tactics, through advice to government, on important agenda items for discussions at the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in October 2010. These items are the post-2010 framework of global biodiversity targets and indicators, national reporting arrangements, improving the effectiveness of the CBD science body (SBSTTA) and the publication of Global Biodiversity Outlook 3 in May 2010 (publishes the global 2010 indicators).

3.2. In addition, JNCC has continued to achieve progress through other work areas, most notably:

- i. Country level plans for implementing the surveillance and monitoring requirements set out in the revised Habitats Regulations which will be completed by the end of June 2010;
- ii. Reporting. A paper by JNCC and Defra, proposing a strategy for EU Directives reporting, was presented to the EU. An outline and timetable for post 2010 UK Biodiversity Reporting was agreed by the UK Biodiversity Standing Committee;
- iii. National Ecosystem Assessment (NEA). JNCC established and chairs an inter-agency group to help facilitate effective agency engagement and has influenced the assessment by participating in the User group and the Scenarios group. Evidence and advice has also been given to the NEA secretariat (WCMC).

3.3. More work needs to be undertaken soon to:

- i. facilitate more marine input to the work;
- ii. plan engagement with IPBES (once established IPBES will need strengthened input from JNCC, at least initially);
- iii. facilitate understanding of the implications of the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CBD in October 2010 (this will be greatly assisted by the UK Biodiversity Partnership Conference in Scotland in November 2010);
- iv. shape the EU biodiversity baseline assessment that will be open for consultation in June or July 2010;
- v. engage with the changing shape of the UK biodiversity research landscape; and,
- vi. respond to requests from OTs to be more involved with international science work.

3.4. Other areas of work identified in the December 2009 Committee paper will also need to be considered when appropriate.

## ANNEX 1

### SCIENCE POLICY INTERFACE WORK BY JNCC

The December 2009 Committee paper was structured around the four themes around which IPBES is being planned. For each theme JNCC identified a number of work areas. Each of the four themes is presented below with a brief list of achievements against each work area.

#### **Theme 1: Scientific independence.**

**Work Area 1a.** *Continuing to use its experience and expertise to provide advice on the requirements, structure and appropriate governance for the proposed IPBES and related European initiatives.*

- European IPBES position established. JNCC advised and participated in an EU expert group.
- IPBES has been placed in a good position to be established at the third and final ad hoc intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting in Korea 7-11 June 2010. JNCC contributed through advice and participation in expert processes.

**Work area 1b.** *Promoting and contributing to considerations within existing science advisory bodies to improve their access to best available science and to establish appropriate linkages with an IPBES, if/when created.*

- UK positions and tactics were produced for a meeting of the CBD science body SBSSTA and for the CBD review of its strategic plan, both in May 2010. JNCC provided advice and briefings on post 2010 targets and indicators, GBO3, Improving the Effectiveness of SBSTTA and on national reporting and assessment processes.

**Work area 1c.** *Providing case studies and examples of national best practice, drawing on experiences in the country agencies, to inform the debate and promote the use of national platforms as a focal point for two-way communication with European and global mechanisms.*

- No progress to date.

#### **Theme 2: Shared knowledge base**

**Work area 2a.** *Continuing to identify research needs in biodiversity science (which comprehends issues of ecosystem services) for the UK (through the Biodiversity Research Advisory Group on which country agencies are represented), for Europe (through EPBRS) and globally and using this information to influence research funding strategies at all of these scales:*

- Informal reviews of the UK Biodiversity Research Advisory Group (BRAG) and the Global Biodiversity Sub-Committee (GBSC) of the Global Environment Change Committee (GECC) were instigated.

**Work area 2b.** *Promoting policy relevance and inter-disciplinary approaches within UK and European research programmes and projects, including the EC Framework Programme for*

*Research and Development, and relevant European Research Area Networks (e.g. BiodivERsA).*

- The European research programme Biodiversa 2 succeeded in its bid for funds. JNCC is a full partner in the project consortium and was instrumental in developing the project proposal.

**Work area 2c.** *Maintaining JNCC's engagement with GBIF to ensure GBIF reaches its full potential to provide the technological solutions, processes and standards as well as the knowledge content and access necessary to meet regional and global biodiversity knowledge needs.*

- The experience built up by JNCC through the NBN was successfully applied to influence the GBIF strategy.
- 25million UK records were mobilised for the next iteration of GBIF- one of the largest contributions to GBIF and about 12% of the GBIF global total.

**Work area 2d.** *Maintaining and further promoting the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) as a national model for global best practice.*

- leading the technical development of the NBN and also the service and support around it.
- JNCC is exploring ways to apply data to assessing status, setting conservation strategy and directing more local scale action. A mechanism for identifying stretches of river for priority conservation action has been developed as an early demonstration of the type of application that can be built.

**Work area 2e.** *Promoting improved coordination of international shared knowledge base initiatives such as GBIF, GEOSS, GEO-BON and 2010 BIP:*

- Influenced how GBIF interfaces with national contributors through JNCC's role as Vice Chair of the National Nodes Committee.
  - i. Assessed the role and workings of GEO-BON.
  - ii. Established engagement with GEO via the UK Environmental Observation Framework.

### **Theme 3: Improving policy relevance of scientific outputs and advice**

**Work area 3a.** *Continuing to contribute to ongoing and future national (NEA), European (EURECA) and global ecosystem assessment projects (including the MA Follow-up Strategy).*

- Chaired and facilitated the inter agency NEA group.
- Represented the interagency group at NEA governance group meetings (User Group and Scenarios Group).

- Facilitated the engagement of Lead Coordination Networks (LCNs) and agency experts with the NEA.
- Made key biodiversity datasets and evidence available to the NEA.
- Provided advice and contributions to the European Environment Agency (EEA) with regard to the European Ecosystem Assessment project (EURECA).

**Work area 3b.** *Engaging with TEEB and promoting its outcomes where appropriate within the assessment and reporting processes for biodiversity and ecosystem service*

- Advised Defra economists and the international section on TEEB.
- Provided advice on a variety of TEEB chapters aimed at policymakers.
- Contributed examples of targeted messages.

**Work area 3c.** *Embedding an outcome oriented indicator based approach to UK reporting and providing this as best practice to influence European and global reporting processes.*

- Participated in, and successfully influenced, European negotiations on future reporting rounds of the Habitats and Birds Directives, biodiversity indicators, and the European Biodiversity Action Plan post 2010, through the use of UK best practice examples and the promotion of approaches used in the UK.
- Coordinated and facilitated the development of country level plans for implementing the surveillance and monitoring requirements set out in the revised EU Habitats Regulations (country plans due for completion at the end of June 2010).

**Work area 3d.** *Providing advice on proposals for IPBES to ensure it can contribute, as appropriate, to these objectives.*

- JNCC's involvement in IPBES is reported under Theme 1.

#### **Theme 4: Building capacity to mainstream biodiversity and ecosystem services for human well-being**

**Work area 4a.** *Working with Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies to increase their understanding of these issues and helping them to contribute to and receive benefits from an enhanced global science-policy interface relating to their own priority areas for biodiversity policy development.*

- Supported Overseas Territories in identifying their research needs and provided guidance and peer review on funding applications for research.

**Work area 4b.** *Providing advice to Defra on the further development of the Darwin Initiative.*

- JNCC served on the Darwin Advisory Committee.
- Advice was provided on enhancing the legacy of Darwin projects both through the re-design of the website and in drafting guidance on data management

- Advice was provided on criteria for the recently launched Overseas Territories Challenge Fund.

**Work area 4c.** *Providing guidance on the ecosystem approach and best practice in the application of methods of economic valuation of biodiversity and ecosystem services.*

- A keynote speech on the ecosystem approach was given at a Northern Ireland Environment Agency workshop.
- Advice was given to many initiatives involved in topics related to ecosystem services and biodiversity valuation.

**Work area 4d.** *Maintaining a flow of information about these international science-policy initiatives to the country agencies, and seeking engagement with country-agencies as and when appropriate.*

- An inter agency consultation and meeting on global post 2010 targets was held
- Consultation on the CBD SBSTTA 14 paper on post 2010 targets and several other relevant papers was undertaken.

## **ANNEX 2.**

### **GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS.**

2010 BIP	2010 Biodiversity Indicators Partnership
BRAG	UK Biodiversity Research Advisory Group
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
EEA	European Environment Agency
EPBRS	European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy
GBIF	Global Biodiversity Information Facility
GBO3	Global Biodiversity Outlook 3 (publication of global biodiversity indicators)
GBSC	Global Biodiversity Sub-Committee of the GECC
GECC	Global Environment Change Committee
GEO	Global Earth Observations
GEO-BON	Global Earth Observations – Biodiversity Observation Network
GEOSS	Global Earth Observations System of Systems
IPBES	Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change.
MA	Millennium Ecosystem Assessment
MEA	Multilateral Environment Agreement (Convention)
NEA	UK National Ecosystem Assessment
NBN	UK National Biodiversity Network
SBSTTA	CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific Technical and Technological Advice
TEEB	The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity
UK BAP	UK Biodiversity Action Plan
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WCMC	UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre