



JOINT NATURE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

IMPLEMENTING THE OUTCOMES OF NAGOYA

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IMPLEMENTING THE OUTCOMES OF NAGOYA

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The coincidence of a number of key changes to the drivers of nature conservation in the UK, and the development of some critical new concepts, has provided both the opportunity and a compelling reason to review nature conservation delivery.
- 1.2 The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has set a new global framework of goals targets and indicators for biodiversity, to guide its own implementation and that of other biodiversity related international agreements such as Ramsar, the Convention on Migratory Species and CITES. The new global framework of 2020 targets (the Aichi Targets) places greater emphasis on the economics of biodiversity, the ecosystem approach, mainstreaming biodiversity into other sectors, and recognises the need to consider ecosystem services as part of the conservation of biodiversity. In particular, the economics of biodiversity has been highlighted because of the TEEB (The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity) publication, the monetary value of carbon sequestration in tackling climate change, the inherent business value of ecosystem services and the benefits gained by offsetting some of the losses of the global economic crisis through formal recognition of the value of biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- 1.3 Within all countries of the UK there has been a relatively long-standing desire to take a more integrated landscape scale approach to conservation. This prompted an informal review of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and its implementation and, in England, an assessment of the adequacy and coherence of the protected area network (the Lawton review) was part of this process. The conclusion of these considerations will be discussed at meetings of the four countries biodiversity group and UK Biodiversity Standing Committee (UKBSC) in the first week of May 2011. The most likely outcome is that a much more independent devolved approach to delivery will be endorsed, with the associated suspension of most UK-scale governance arrangements and a new style UK role centred around:
 - i. reporting;
 - ii. providing international and European context and links;
 - iii. the facilitation of discussion around common challenges and approaches to delivery;

- iv. the provision of evidence to contribute to implementation of the country strategies and frameworks.
- 1.4 These changes alone would have been sufficient to herald the onset of a step change to nature conservation delivery in the UK but, in addition, there is a further requirement to accommodate the outcomes of the Spending Review. These include finding efficiencies through the use of the third sector, accommodating more involvement by local people, maximising private sector engagement and broadening responsibility across more sectors of government (mainstreaming).
- 1.5 Inevitably, country biodiversity strategies and natural environment frameworks are being developed and reviewed to take account of these changes and reflect the greater emphasis on devolved delivery. In England, the Natural Environment White Paper is being published to identify and agree cross-departmental priorities and a new EU Biodiversity Strategy is under development.
- 1.6 The consistent threads through all of this change are the EU directives which seem to be requiring increased consideration as long-standing conservation delivery mechanisms are reviewed.
- 1.7 All of the above means that nature conservation delivery in the UK, Europe and globally is facing an unprecedented scale of change.
- 1.8 This paper aims to bring together a brief overview of the key developments driving the change in the UK, the work being undertaken to manage the change and the implications this might have for UK scale work and JNCC.

2. Nagoya outcomes

- 2.1 The Tenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 10) took place in Nagoya Japan in October 2010. The apparent success of the Nagoya meeting hides an increasing tension between the developing countries, championed by the likes of Brazil, China, Malaysia, India etc (G77) and the diminishing global power of the rather few developed countries. This is exaggerated by the CBD moving towards implementation and the increased economic stakes around decisions and development aid as this happens. Consequently, the decisions are highly political, more specific, based on less science and increasingly involved in defending or promoting biodiversity policy lines critical to other international instruments.
- 2.2 Despite the difficult, slow and frustrating negotiations at CBD meetings, the convention is still essential because of the increasing importance of global pressures and issues to the success of national biodiversity action. The CBD provides a platform to address these global issues and also establishes a common purpose to national action and a forum to share best practice and learn from each other's experiences.
- 2.3 To address global pressures and issues, CBD COP 10:
 - i. agreed a new legally binding protocol to regulate the commercial benefits from genetic resources. CBD refers to this as Access and Benefit Sharing or ABS;

- ii. took a series of decisions on the mobilisation of resources needed to meet the new 2020 targets,
 - iii. went further into means to improve cooperative working between international agreements and instruments;
 - iv. considered climate change, in particular ensuring biodiversity safeguards were in place around the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) initiative to Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+) and the role of healthy ecosystems in carbon sequestration and adaptation;
 - v. tried to minimise the negative and maximise the positive ecological footprints of biofuels, production; and,
 - vi. established an expert group and set in train work to regulate the spread of invasive alien species through pet and live bait markets.
- 2.4 To provide more common purpose across member states Nagoya agreed the strategic framework of 2020 targets (Aichi Targets). These targets are designed to provide a focus for the next decade and a step towards CBD's 2050 vision and represent possibly one of the most important decisions taken by the CBD to-date. The 2010 target was low profile in its early days but had a very significant influence on conservation activity towards the end of its life. The challenge for the 2020 targets is to maintain this momentum and provide strategic direction for the next decade. The 20 Aichi Targets come with an obligation on Parties to integrate them into their own biodiversity strategies and plans and to report on this activity to COP 11 in October 2012. Work to develop global indicators for the targets is also underway.
- 2.5 CBD COP 10 also endorsed the establishment of the International Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) which was subsequently confirmed by a meeting of the UNEP Governing Council in Nairobi in February 2011. IPBES has objectives to make more scientific evidence available for biodiversity decision making through multi-scale scientific assessments, improved data access and increased scientific capacity to undertake these tasks. The first plenary meeting of IPBES will be in 2011 and the UK government, through Defra and DfID, are currently leading the global support for IPBES both financially and in terms of advocacy. The way IPBES will work is still very uncertain and, to date, the discussions have primarily been about governance arrangements, standing committees, chairing arrangements, hosting and finance. Very soon the work on undertaking assessments and the means by which countries will be expected to contribute will start. It is critical that the technical work of IPBES helps to improve the prominence and influence of science in biodiversity decision making at all scales, and assists the increasingly political debates on big global issues such as climate change and global biodiversity targets. JNCC needs to engage with IPBES to a level appropriate to the government lead on policy and the vast scientific legacy the UK has to contribute. The global prominence of the UK in this area of biodiversity continues today through world leading projects such as the National Ecosystem Assessment and whatever follow-up process is put in place after its publication.

- 2.6 A final service provided by the CBD to all parties is the provision of guidance and the sharing of best practice to assist national implementation. At CBD COP 10:
- i. guidance was produced on communications, sustainable use and incentive measures;
 - ii. amendments to action plan frameworks and tools were made to the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, and work programmes for Inland Waters, Mountains, Drylands, Agricultural Biodiversity, Marine and Coastal Biodiversity and Forests; and
 - iii. sharing of best practice was facilitated through decisions on the Clearing House Mechanism, Technology Transfer, and a new reporting framework.

3. Country strategies and other relevant work

- 3.1 A summary of developing country environment strategies and frameworks was given to Committee in December. These summaries have been updated in Annex 1.
- 3.2 The recommendations from the Making Space for Nature report (Lawton review) are also relevant to shaping the face of nature conservation, at least in England. The report reinforces the need for *“...a step change in our approach to wildlife conservation, from trying to hang on to what we have, to one of large-scale habitat restoration and recreation, under-pinned by the re-establishment of ecological processes and ecosystem services...”*.
- 3.3 The report identifies a number of ‘big messages’ as follows:
- i. there is an ongoing need to manage existing wildlife sites to the highest standards;
 - ii. properly planned ecological networks are needed, including restoration areas – *Ecological Restoration Zones* (ERZs) should be the gold-standard, where we should focus efforts;
 - iii. many surviving patches of wildlife habitat fall outside of the SSSI series, with poor protection and management – many have the potential to make an important contribution to an enhanced ecological network;
 - iv. more should be made of win-wins, including ecosystem service provision to deliver societal benefits and a more effective ecological network;
 - v. the required step-change in nature conservation in England will not be achieved without society accepting that it is necessary, desirable and achievable – strong leadership from government and collaboration across all sectors and levels of society are required;
 - vi. the total annual cost of establishing a coherent and resilient network is estimated to be in the range of £600 million to £1.1 billion.
- 3.4 The big messages are then summarised in terms of actions to enhance the resilience and coherence of the protected areas network in England as:

- i. improving the quality of current sites by better habitat management;
- ii. increasing the size of current wildlife sites;
- iii. enhancing connections between sites;
- iv. creating new sites;
- v. reducing the pressures on wildlife by improving the wider environment, including through buffering wildlife sites.

In short 'More – Bigger – Better – Joined'.

- 3.5 It is acknowledged that the more that is done to improve the wider environment within which wildlife sites sit, the less the other options will be required yet this is last in the list of actions which is in priority order. The question that England needs to answer, and other countries might like to consider, is the extent to which the report's conclusions capture the step change to conservation that we require and whether the traditional aspects of conservation are being defended appropriately or at the expense of essential new approaches.
- 3.6 There are a number of common themes that permeate all of the natural environment and biodiversity strategy and framework development across the UK. These are:
- i. the environment and natural resources contribute to national prosperity, health and well-being;
 - ii. ecosystem services underpin life, provide social benefits and need to be mainstreamed;
 - iii. there is an urgent need to understand ecosystem services and incorporate their value into the way all sectors work;
 - iv. decision making needs to be devolved from central to local levels (localism);
 - v. public participation must play an important role in making decisions and taking action;
 - vi. new approaches to planning are needed, including taking into account the full complexity of land use (e.g. Green Infrastructure);
 - vii. the Ecosystem Approach has a key role in meeting the stated objectives;
 - viii. there remains an urgent need to improve understanding of how the environment works (e.g. the relationship between biodiversity and ecosystem function) and how it is influenced (e.g. how to address food production, planning, flood risk, water management and biodiversity, together at appropriate scales);
 - ix. climate change mitigation and adaptation;

- x. development of a low carbon economy, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and carbon storage in soils.
- 3.7 Biodiversity strategies are also being developed in the Overseas Territories. Only four UK Overseas Territories have ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity. These are the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Gibraltar, and St. Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha. An in depth review of the status of implementation of the Convention of Biological Diversity and of Biodiversity Action Plans in the European Union Overseas Entities is being carried out by the IUCN. Although not all UK Overseas Territories have biodiversity action plans they do all have policies that refer to the environment and biodiversity.
- 3.8 It is important to think of biodiversity planning in Overseas Territories in the context of small islands and explore the option of it existing under the umbrella of a broader national plan. There are a limited number of plans that can be delivered with limited human resources and broader plans covering all aspects of development are often a pre-requisite to receiving any form of development aid.
- 3.9 The CBD developed the Island Programme of Work specifically with small island states in mind to make the broad scope of work of the Convention more accessible, applicable and relevant to countries with very limited human resources and a unique ecology. This programme of work is currently due to be reviewed at CBD COP 11 in 2012 which provides an opportunity for JNCC to work with Overseas Territory governments and UK government to look at how existing OT environmental plans are delivering the Island Programme of Work, and feed into the review.

4. How implementation is being considered at a UK scale

- 4.1 In the UK, the outcomes of Nagoya are being taken forward through four parallel strands of work:
- i. a high level implementation plan lead by Defra's international biodiversity policy unit;
 - ii. integration of key elements into country biodiversity strategies and the establishment of a UK coordination structure to support this activity, lead by the four countries biodiversity group;
 - iii. improvement of the evidence base and science policy interface, primarily through support to IPBES and NEA follow up; and
 - iv. engagement with European and Global scale activities related to the Nagoya outcomes.
- 4.2 The Defra CBD implementation plan is an ongoing piece of work to identify leads for each of the Nagoya recommendations to parties and to identify the type of response the UK wishes to undertake. JNCC is involved in this work and has responsibility for a few of the more technical actions but generally works to support a government policy lead. The most obvious issues raised by this work are:

- i. the need to report on integration of the Aichi targets into our national implementation plans in 2012;
 - ii. the opportunity provided by the next national report to the CBD, due in March 2014, to demonstrate the integrated outcome indicator based approach to reporting that the UK wants to promote. This will also be relatively well synchronised with the requirement to report to the habitats directive which should lead to the production of evidence that is also useful for reporting to the CBD; and,
 - iii. the need to develop UK and national indicators to report on progress towards the Aichi targets
- 4.3 Other important actions for JNCC will undoubtedly emerge from further consideration the clearing house mechanism, marine biodiversity and international forest decisions.
- 4.4 The Four Countries Biodiversity Group met in Stirling in November 2010 and requested JNCC to undertake a light-touch look at the linkage between the new global and European targets, and the revisions of the country biodiversity strategies, and to identify elements of work that need to be taken forward at a UK level.
- 4.5 The output JNCC intends to produce is to map the country work against the CBD targets to identify where work is proposed or already being undertaken against each of them, and to highlight where there are gaps or supplementary activities that require action at the UK level. As JNCC has already mapped the targets to the existing country biodiversity indicators, this will allow read-across between the work envisaged, and the indicators that might be appropriate to measure progress. It is anticipated that this mapping can be completed in time for the next Four Countries meeting in May 2011, to allow the opportunity for countries to consider their work in an international context.
- 4.6 JNCC has already identified some gaps in the UK biodiversity indicators ecosystem services, foot printing, climate change, and on measuring access and benefits sharing as defined by the Protocol also agreed in Nagoya.
- 4.7 At the European scale, the new EU Biodiversity Strategy, work on Green Infrastructures, reform of the Common Agriculture and Fisheries policies and the requirement to report on Habitats Directive implementation obviously have implications for country environment strategies and how the UK considers the outcomes from Nagoya. These European issues need to be considered at a UK scale. Other relevant European developments that might arise need to be identified quickly.
- 4.8 EU preparations are underway for the next multi-annual financial framework (MFF), commencing in 2014. The next few years will be a critical time, because the outcome of decisions on the MFF and associated EU policies will have a fundamental impact on a wide range of EU and UK policy and programming for the next financial period. These decisions mean that evidence and advice should be focused on providing the greatest added value for the nature conservation objectives of all the relevant UK authorities. Focus can be achieved through: intelligence gathering on all EU initiatives that have existing or future impacts on biodiversity; analysis of the scope and likely development of those initiatives to identify links with UK and country

level strategic priorities; and ongoing development of advice 'roadmaps' for the key initiatives to guide EU engagement.

- 4.9 This is only one dimension of European work in JNCC. The other dimension is providing on-going technical advice on the implementation of related UK legislation and helping the UK to meet its EU monitoring and reporting obligations. JNCC and the country conservation bodies also assist Defra in the advisory groups and sub-groups formed under the Coordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature, with JNCC coordinating information, at a UK level, on the work of these groups. These two dimensions of European work are not mutually exclusive; providing intelligence and analysis of future initiatives should avoid any unexpected impact on the implementation of existing legislation and policy.

5. Suggestions for UK-scale roles

- 5.1 The UK role to support integration of the outcomes from Nagoya and other international and European biodiversity related commitments into national implementation strategies represents a natural evolution of the work JNCC has traditionally undertaken to support the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. It is likely that the Biodiversity Reporting and Information Group (BRIG) and the UK Biodiversity Standing Committee (UKBSC) will be wound down and the Four Countries Biodiversity Group might undertake a more formal UK role supported by JNCC. JNCC has been requested to recommend an outline UK role to the four countries group in May 2011 and the type of UK framework needed to support this role. These changes would increase JNCC's facilitating role as a channel of communication between international and country-based players.
- 5.2 The following elements of UK-scale work and coordination are proposed:
- i. *Reporting.* To include the agreement and production of UK indicators and evidence to contribute to country indicators, the collation of UK biodiversity reports to meet international commitments and the obligations of EU directives, including provision of information and advice to national implementation to ensure that European and international requirements are understood and considered within national reporting and evidence provision arrangements.
 - ii. *International/European context.* Devolved implementation of biodiversity actions needs to be aware of how national activities relate to international and European commitments and to have a means by which to influence and support European and international negotiations through devolved best practice and policies. The UK role should be to provide intelligence and feedback on European and international issues and to represent devolved views.
 - iii. *Evidence provision.* Many monitoring, surveillance and biological recording schemes are undertaken at UK scale because of the very significant economies of scale and the volunteer recording arrangements. It is important that these UK scale activities deliver data and evidence to meet national requirements and ensure that the overarching portfolio of monitoring and recording activities meets all requirements and obligations. This is achieved through a UK surveillance and monitoring strategy.

- iv. *Facilitating and contributing to common country approaches and solutions.* Where there are clear benefits to a degree of commonality UK facilitation is often required. Benefits are usually associated with meeting European and international commitments but can also arise when a degree of common understanding assists communication and cascading of delivery to local levels. Common themes and challenges might include application of the ecosystem approach, development of green infrastructures, economic valuation of biodiversity and ecosystem services, and mainstreaming.
- v. *Overseas Territories.* This will not have implications for national implementation even though some national best practice could be relevant to the territories. Nevertheless, some support to Overseas Territories in responding to the outcomes of Nagoya will be needed and is probably best delivered as part of the overall UK scale role.

6. The requirement for a UK-scale framework

- 6.1 The work required to support the UK role proposed in the previous section of this paper is already included within the JNCC business plan for 2011/12 and much of it builds on traditional JNCC activities, so a level of governance is already provided through JNCC's internal management processes, by Joint Committee and the inter-agency Chief Scientists Group. Nevertheless, because of the strong links to country biodiversity groups and strategies, some form of governance arrangement that provides stronger links and accountability to national implementation would be helpful. This was one of the elements of the former/current UK Biodiversity Action Plan governance arrangements that proved very beneficial. Consequently, it is proposed that the Four Countries Biodiversity Group should be given a more formal and prominent role to oversee the work and to develop a light touch UK Natural Environment Framework to communicate the strategic direction, benefits, responsibilities and ways of working for the UK scale work eventually agreed.

Annex 1. Summary of developments with country biodiversity strategies and frameworks

The Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP)

The NEWP is scheduled for publication in May and will consider amongst other things the recommendations of the Making Space for Nature Report. The majority of responses to the NEWP consultation have taken the view that although the existing designation framework has protected key sites reasonably well, there is widespread concurrence with the findings and recommendations contained in the Lawton Review.

In the NEWP, there is an underlying emphasis on the role of the natural environment in underpinning economic prosperity, health and well-being; and an over-arching theme of climate change mitigation and adaptation. The Lawton Review identifies the many ecosystem service delivery benefits of a more resilient and coherent network, and makes the case for ERZs to ensure functioning ecosystems delivering multiple benefits.

A Living Wales

The Welsh National Environment Framework aims to deliver sustainable development, proposing a new, integrated approach to managing the natural environment that improves the health of ecosystems as a whole – taking an *ecosystem approach*.

This will aim to: (1) focus on the value of the environment as a whole, delivering environmental, social and economic outcomes; (2) deliver positive environmental change, not simply conserving what we have; (3) change to how decisions affecting the environment are made; (4) deliver positive economic and social opportunities; and (5) deliver opportunities for public involvement.

In addition, the new approach is needed to achieve adaptation to climate change, ensuring that the value of the environment to society is captured (development of a formal accounting method for natural capital), and putting the long-term health of ecosystems and their services at the heart of decision-making.

Getting the best from our land

This aims to set out a vision and long-term objectives for an integrated approach to sustainable land use in Scotland, to deliver a prosperous and sustainable low-carbon economy, underpinned by successful land-based businesses, flourishing natural environments and vibrant communities.

Management of Scotland's landscapes for the wide range of benefits they supply underpins the strategy, but where land has a high value for a primary use (e.g. prime agricultural land, flood plains, water catchments and soil carbon stores) this value should be recognised in decision-making. It also acknowledges the need for land-use decisions to be informed as far as possible by an understanding of how the different components of ecosystems interact at a broad scale, taking into account impacts on biodiversity and future capacity to deliver ecosystem services. Land-use decisions need to be informed by an understanding of the opportunities and threats brought about by the changing climate. Greenhouse gas emissions associated with land use should be reduced and land use should continue to contribute to climate change objectives. Further, where land has ceased to fulfil a useful function because it is derelict or vacant, it should be a priority to examine options for restoring such land to economic, social or environmentally productive uses.

Land use must integrate the conservation of natural resources with social and economic goals, and help to sustain the health of the natural environment on which we depend, adopting an *ecosystem approach*. This necessitates a focus on the following areas: (1) appreciating the benefits – recognising that well functioning ecosystems provide a range of services in a cost-effective way; (2) Maintaining, restoring and enhancing the components and the functions of natural environments – enhancing actions to conserve biodiversity, and integrating this with land management at an appropriately broad scale; (3) carbon stores - locking up carbon from the atmosphere for the long term is an important action to help minimise further changes to the climate (in Scotland, there are significant opportunities to lock up carbon in soils and in vegetation).