

Global Biodiversity Sub-Committee (GBSC)

Meeting papers

GECC Sub-Committee Minutes

15 February 2005

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**GECC SUB-COMMITTEE ON GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY ISSUES
MINUTES: 15th February 2005**

Attendees:

Ian Bainbridge, Scottish Executive
Rob Bowman, FCO
Geoff Boxshall, Royal Society
Karen Dickenson, Defra
Noranne Ellis, SNH (on behalf of Wyn Jones, JNCC)
Richard Ferris (Secretariat), JNCC
Pamela Kempton, NERC
Paul Leonard, Defra Marine and Waterways
Eimear Nic Lughadha, RBG Kew (on behalf of Peter Crane)
Elizabeth Moore (Secretariat), JNCC
Miles Parker (Chair), Defra Science Directorate
Glenys Parry, Defra Environment and Sustainable Development International
Clare Rushowski, BBSRC
Andy Stott, Defra Natural Resources and Rural Affairs
Mike Waldock, CEFAS

Guest speaker: Neville Ash, WCMC

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded the group about its remit, which is to inform UK science strategy relating to global biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

Agenda Item 1: Introductions and apologies

Each participant introduced themselves and apologies were received from Joanna Elliott, DfID, Gary Grubb, ESRC and Quentin Wheeler, NHM.

ACTION POINT 1/1: **Secretariat** to follow up attendance at future meetings by representative from DfID

Agenda Item 2: Minutes of the last meeting (GECC GBSC M(04))

These were taken as a true and accurate record of the last meeting.

Agenda Item 3: Actions and matters arising (GECC GBSC MA(04))

A paper giving details of the progress on the action points from 2nd November was circulated. The following outstanding actions will be carried forward.

ACTION POINT 3/1: **Secretariat** to revisit the terms of reference at sub-committee meeting in May 2005.

ACTION POINT 3/2: **Secretariat** to collate responses on International Conventions paper (GECC GBSC 04(03)) and to re-issue the request concerning members' input to this table with further clarification, by 28 February 2005. **All** to provide information on their

organisation's involvement in each convention and a description of science gaps by 18 March 2005.

- ACTION POINT 3/3: **CR** to produce short information note (maximum 2 sides A4) on research programme priority setting processes and timetables by 28 February 2005.
- ACTION POINT 3/4: **Secretariat** to invite Martin Parry (Tyndall Centre) to discuss climate change at the May or August meeting as appropriate.
- ACTION POINT 3/5: **Secretariat** to contact Trevor Gyner with regard to work on marine issues covered by the Inter Agency Committee on Marine Science and Technology (IACMST) to ascertain links and clarify the interface between IACMST and GECC GBSC, and report back to the next meeting in May.
- ACTION POINT 3/6: **Secretariat** to follow up the possibility of having GBSC web-page on main GECC website and ascertain whether there is a password protected mechanism and report back to meeting in May 2005.
- ACTION POINT 3/7: **All** to liaise with Secretariat on any points of issue with the revised work programme (GECC GBSC (04)05) by 4 March 2005.

Agenda Item 4: CBD SBSTTA10

GP tabled a note providing a brief synopsis of the SBSTTA 10 outcomes (GECC GBSC (05) 02) and a verbal update was given. The main issues were island biodiversity; indicators; and goals and targets for the programmes of work on the biodiversity of inland waters and marine and coastal biodiversity.

The programme of work on island biodiversity had been widened to cover all islands, not just Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The goals and targets had been recast to fit more closely with the overarching framework of goals and targets agreed at COP 7. Although priority actions had been agreed, supporting actions remained in square brackets to be negotiated at COP 8. With regard to island biodiversity the issue for the UK was how much detail we wanted in the work programme though limiting it could prove difficult. One issue for the UK was non-native species: how they are dealt with and ways in which we can share best practice. There would be an ad hoc technical experts group (AHTEG) on invasive alien species and Ian Bainbridge had been nominated for the UK. The CBD Secretariat would decide the composition of the group.

It was noted that JNCC had done a lot of work on non-native species in the overseas territories. Furthermore, the FCO and DfID are funding a joint programme, the Overseas Territories Environment Programme (OTEP), to

support implementation of the Environment Charters and environmental management more generally in the UK OTs. The programme was supporting projects on invasive alien species, and FCO had funded a successful feral cat eradication on Ascension Island. These initiatives presented opportunities for the UK to share information and should be drawn upon when making formal presentations to CoP8 on island biodiversity.

With regard to indicators, WCMC were working with the CBD Secretariat to develop headline global indicators in time for CoP8 (May 2006). The immediate aim is to 'test' the feasibility and application of 13 headline indicators as recommended by COP7 (Decision VII/30 <http://www.biodiv.org/decisions/default.aspx?m=COP-07&id=7767&lg=0>) and amended by SBSTTA10. This requires the mobilisation of existing information held by international organisations and other institutions. The Royal Society had provided a useful input to this activity, enabling a greater engagement with the wider scientific community and identifying appropriate methods and data. A need for continuing engagement with scientific community was identified. It was noted that there was a recent paper by Peter Crane and others in *Science* on raising the profile of the science behind biodiversity assessment with calls for the endorsement of leading scientists.

ACTION POINT 4/1: **EL** to circulate information on the paper by Crane et al. in *Science* to the GBSC by 28 February 2005.

The European Environment Agency are leading on developing European biodiversity indicators. An implementation plan has been established involving a number of expert groups. The UK has nominated 5 experts to participate in this exercise.

With regard to goals and targets for the programmes of work on the biodiversity of inland waters and marine and coastal biodiversity, the AHTEG proposals were largely adopted, with some amendments to the targets relating to traditional knowledge and access and benefit sharing. It was agreed that the provisional framework of global goals and targets in Decision VII/30 should be reviewed by CoP8.

A process of peer review has been agreed for the Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO) based around headline indicators including key actions and targets for developing the 2010 targets. It is likely that a draft GBO will be prepared for SBSTTA 11 at the end of the year and that a peer review will follow the draft.

ACTION POINT 4/2: **AS** to keep GBSC informed about the GBO process and timetable for peer review.
Ongoing

Agenda Item 5: Outcome of the Paris biodiversity symposium

A paper containing the Paris Declaration on Biodiversity and a statement from the conference was circulated (GECC GBSC (01) 03). The symposium was attended by 2,500 people and included presentations by world leading

scientists. The conference helped to raise the profile of biodiversity, especially within France and provided a platform for a major policy statement by President Chirac and the launch of the Paris declaration.

President Chirac called for the establishment of an inter-governmental panel on biodiversity. In response, the statement from the participants recommended the launch of 'an international multi-stakeholder consultative process' to assess the need for an international mechanism to provide a critical assessment of scientific information that builds on existing initiatives and institutions. The French are taking the lead in taking forward proposals for this consultative process and the UK has offered to assist.

It was noted that whilst biodiversity will not be on the agenda of the G8 Summit itself, there would be an opportunity to discuss biodiversity at a separate meeting of the G8 Environment Ministers which will take place on 17 March in advance of the joint G8 Environment –Development Ministers meeting. The discussion would be on biodiversity and sustainable livelihoods. It was also noted that the G8 is a very restricted group of countries and that issues concerning governance arrangements for global biodiversity policy need to be addressed inclusively.

AS presented some notes of an Anglo-French bi-lateral meeting, held before the conference, which provided a diagnosis of the problems preventing the effective use of science in policy decisions concerning global biodiversity. There was a brief, general discussion about the merits of a new inter-governmental mechanism and current UK position. GBSC were asked to provide their views.

ACTION POINT 5/1: **AS** to circulate PowerPoint slides on the French Biodiversity Symposium to GBSC drawing attention to the list of big issues which will need to be addressed and canvassing members views on the establishment of an inter-governmental panel on biodiversity, by 28 February.

ACTION POINT 5/2: **All** to provide their views on the establishment of an inter-governmental panel on biodiversity by 3 March.

Agenda Item 6: Millennium Ecosystem Assessment

Neville Ash, WCMC, made a presentation on the MA which included an overview of the process and a synthesis of the main findings with particular relevance to biodiversity. The MA focuses on ecosystem services and the benefits people derive from ecosystems. It draws together a vast amount of information about what is already known and highlights gaps in our knowledge of ecosystems and the underlying science. The MA delivers new findings based on current data and provides an assessment of those findings. The main publication will be formally released in early April, along with a series of synthesis reports and summaries.

Following the presentation there was a discussion on the main issues relevant to the GBSC. The question was raised as to whether the G8 Environmental Ministers would have the opportunity for an advance sight of the main findings to ensure they are aware of the emerging issues.

ACTION POINT 6/1: **NA** to forward 2-page summary on the MA to GP by 3 March

The Chair reminded the group that the purpose of the presentation was to prepare the ground for a more substantive discussion at the May meeting. The group agreed that the focus of the next meeting should be on the science gaps identified in the report how these might be addressed and what role the UK could play. Whilst the MA does not aim to set the research agenda it does make explicit references to gaps and shortages of information which could help to inform the research community.

ACTION POINT 6/2: **Secretariat** (in consultation with NA, WCMC) to consider how to obtain a summary of the research gaps to inform the substantive discussion at the May meeting of the GBSC.

The level of certainty of the data in the MA was discussed and reassurance was given that within the report each level of findings has some explicit level of confidence, for example the level of consensus within the science community. With regard to the scenarios provided in the report none of these were given any level of certainty and they were intended to provide a tool for looking at how decisions could impact people in the future. However, the MA has developed four global scenarios exploring possible future changes in drivers, ecosystems, ecosystem services and human well-being.

It was considered helpful if guidance on the policy context for this work could be provided as part of this agenda item.

ACTION POINT 6/3: **GP/IB** to provide guidance on policy context in which the UK is working as part of the substantive discussion on the MA at May meeting of GBSC.

Neville Ash was thanked for his presentation and involvement at the meeting and he extended an invitation to host the next GBSC meeting at WCMC in Cambridge.

ACTION POINT 6/4: **Secretariat** to liaise with WCMC on arrangements for holding next meeting of the GBSC on 17 May.

Agenda Item 7: AOB

An update was given on the Defra review of ecosystem services. This was a literature survey commissioned by Defra in 2004. The draft report had been highly technical and did not highlight the key messages and gaps. Defra had not yet reviewed the final report but would consider what elements of the report would be most useful for members of the group. It was thought that there may be some potential links between the review and the MA.

ACTION POINT 7/1: **GP** to liaise with Secretariat over distribution of the findings and to consider whether to invite consultants to next GBSC meeting to give short presentation on their findings of the literature review of ecosystem services by 31 March.

ACTION POINT 7/2: **PL** to circulate list of references to publications of relevance to the GBSC by 4 March.

AS notified the meeting of the success of a French-led ERA-Net proposal, *BiodivERsA*, concerned with examining best practice in establishing priorities for biodiversity research and management of programmes at an EU level. NERC and Defra (supported by JNCC) are partners in the project consortium, and have responsibility for significant elements of work packages. The contract negotiations with the European Commission are now at an advanced stage, and work will begin in the autumn of 2005.

It was suggested that the May meeting of the GBSC could usefully include a discussion on the *BiodivERsA* project (led by RF).

ACTION POINT 7/3: **RF** to prepare a presentation on *BiodivERsA* for the May meeting.

The next meeting of the European Platform for Biodiversity Research Science (EPBRS) will be held in Budapest from 31st March to 4th April. More information can be found at: <http://www.epbrs.org/>. The subsequent meeting will take place within the period of the UK's EU Presidency, and a proposal has been made to host the meeting in Scotland. The topic for discussion will be climate change and biodiversity, especially the research gaps relating to adaptation strategies.

ACTION POINT 7/4: **Secretariat** to circulate the link to BIOPLATFORM and MARBENA, to enable members to take part in the e-conference discussions prior to the EPBRS meeting in Hungary (31 March – 4 April 2005).

PL gave an update on marine science initiatives (see Annex I for details).

Annex 1: Update on Marine Science initiatives

Paul Leonard (Defra – Marine & Waterways) welcomed the opportunity to summarise R&D that had implications nationally & internationally.

1. The Defra State of the Seas Report would be launched by the Environment Minister, Elliott Morley on 1 March 2005 and would show a series of environmental indicators as green for 'good', amber for 'OK' and red for 'of concern'.
2. Defra had supported a National Biodiversity Trust Joint Venture Agreement which now exists to make the millions of wildlife & habitat records more accessible & easier to use. (See www.nbn.org.uk.)
3. Defra (MW) were supporting a CEFAS lead project that should demonstrate the ecosystem-based approach (AE1148) 'Integrated science for integrated management – developing the capacity for adaptive ecosystem management'. This would continue until 2010 to meet ministerial commitments. (See www.cefas.co.uk/science/ecosystems/ae1148.htm)
4. AMBLE (ME3109) 'Assessment of Marine Biology linked to Ecosystems' at the Plymouth Marine Laboratory, aimed to develop & test protocols for the assessment of biodiversity & environmental health in the context of an ecosystem-based approach. Collaborating with other EU laboratories involved with determining biodiversity, a UK site near St Marys on the Scilly Isles had been rated the most significant biodiversity site in the EU. (Contact Richard Warwick rmw@pml.ac.uk or Paul Somerfield pjso@pml.ac.uk).
5. Working with the Chief Scientist for the Environment Agency, Mike Depledge and two Plymouth scientists a paper had been published in Mutation Research. This sought to explain about integrated environmental management linking harmful effects of pollution in sentinel animals & to their ecological consequences through the use of biomarkers. (See MOORE M., READMAN J., DEPLEDGE M.J. AND LEONARD D.R.P. (2004) An integrated biomarker-based strategy for ecotoxicological evaluation of risk in environmental management Mutation Research 552 247 – 268.
6. Terrestrial and aquatic procedures for determining biodiversity indices remained very different & a paper would be published in 2005 in the Journal of Environmental Management with the aim of stimulating that debate. (Look out for LEONARD D.R.P., CLARK K.R., SOMERFIELD P. and WARWICK R (In press) The application of an indicator based on taxonomic distinctness for UK marine biodiversity assessments J Env. Mangmt.).
7. CEFAS had undertaken a series of projects on determining seabed habitats and a brochure was provided of mapping techniques.
8. Defra would also be launching a Marine Data Information Partnership (MDIP) and this sought to establish an enabling framework for managing marine data & information with the aim of encapsulating the philosophy of capture once & use many times, enabling the transformation of marine data and information into evidence &

knowledge e.g. using Data Archiving Centres. (additional information available by e-mail mdip@defra.gsi.gov.uk or visit www.oceannet.org).