

Global Biodiversity Sub-Committee (GBSC)

Meeting papers

GECC SUB-COMMITTEE ON GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY ISSUES MINUTES

6 February 2007

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**GECC SUB-COMMITTEE ON GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY ISSUES
MINUTES: 6 FEBRUARY 2007**

Attendees:

Andy Stott, Defra
Amanda Reid, BBSRC
Marcus Yeo, JNCC
Rebecca Yare (for Mary Gibby, RBGE)
Eimear Nic Lughadha, RBGK
Alan Paton, RBGK
Chris Lyal, NHM
Richard Ferris, JNCC (Secretariat)
Elizabeth Moore, JNCC (Secretariat)
Miles Parker, Defra (Chair)
Izabella Koziell, DfID
Sarah Moon, Defra
Chris Baker (for Pamela Kempton, NERC)
Sharon McAuslan (for Glenys Parry)

Apologies:

Glenys Parry, Defra
Ian Bainbridge, SE
Shaun Earl, FCO
Nick Dulvy, CEFAS
Rachel Garthwaite, Royal Society
Gary Grubb, ESRC
Sarah Nelson, Defra
Eric Blencowe, Defra
Pamela Kempton, NERC
Mary Gibby, RBGE
Andrea Leedale, Defra

Guests:

Mary Barkham, ERFF

Agenda Item 1: Introductions and Apologies

Apologies were received from Glenys Parry, Defra, Ian Bainbridge, SE, Shaun Earl, FCO, Nick Dulvy, CEFAS, Rachel Garthwaite, Royal Society, Gary Grubb, ESRC, Sarah Nelson, Defra, Eric Blencowe, Defra, Pamela Kempton, NERC, Mary Gibby, RBGE, Andrea Leedale, Defra

Agenda Item 2: Work programme - National capacity issues

Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies

Focus: National capacity and policy ownership issues around biodiversity research within the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies.

Aim: To address who is leading on OT issues and what the required actions are.

Marcus Yeo (JNCC) reported that, with the appointment of a designated OTs officer in JNCC, they would take the lead on drafting a paper on this, in collaboration with Defra, FCO, DfID and the Scottish Executive. Eric Blencowe (Defra) had given his support to this approach. .

ACTION 2/1: JNCC (MY) to agree the lead role in preparing a paper on national capacity priorities within the OTs, and take this forward in order to report back to the August GBSC meeting.

Digitising and mobilising taxonomic data

Chris Lyal (NHM) made a presentation in support of the paper prepared by NHM, RBGE and RBG Kew, on national capacity issues surrounding funding for digitising and mobilising taxonomic data. There was broad support for the case outlined by the paper, but it was felt that a more compelling case would be made if some quantification was provided.

ACTION 2/2: NHM (CL) to revise the paper on the gaps in digitising taxonomic data, to quantify the extent of the problem and cost implications of a range of possible solutions. This paper should be circulated to members in advance of the May GBSC meeting, at which a more substantive discussion could be had.

National capacity in mycology

Eimear Nic Lughadha (RBG Kew) introduced a paper by RBG Kew and RBGE on the gap in national capacity within the field of mycology. Essentially there are only two major players working within this field, CABI and Kew, and CABI want to hand over their collection and responsibilities to Kew. RBGK are committed to maintaining their involvement in mycology but feel the UK needs to take a stand on this issue and decide what future it should have. Recognising that this is a national issue, it was felt more appropriate for it to be addressed by UK BRAG.

ACTION 2/4: Secretariat (RF) to discuss the mycology paper with RBG Kew (EL), and decide whether it requires any revision before issuing it to UK BRAG members, in advance of the next UK BRAG meeting on Thursday 7th June.

Agenda Item 3: BRAG report

Richard Ferris (UK BRAG Secretariat) provided a short update on the work of the Group. Clarification was sought over the respective roles of UK BRAG and GBSC in relation to the Crown Dependencies and the Overseas Territories. It was agreed that UK BRAG's remit would include the CDs, and GBSC would address issues in relation to the OTs.

ACTION 3/1: Secretariat (RF) to ensure that both GBSC and UK BRAG are aware of their respective roles in relation to OTs and CDs.

ACTION 3/2: Secretariat (RF) to circulate the UK BRAG weblink to members of both UK BRAG and GBSC, drawing attention to the new Terms of Reference.

Agenda Item 4: ERFF presentation and discussion

Mary Barkham (ERFF Secretariat) gave a presentation on the work of the

Environmental Research Funders' Forum. This focused on the activities of ERFF's Working Groups. The four working groups are planning, research co-ordination, stakeholder engagement and training. ERFF will be looking at horizon scanning activities at their next general meeting in October, and will involve representatives from Defra and OST.

ERFF plan to launch an emerging priorities whiteboard on their website which can be populated by any organisation or group. It was suggested that GBSC could usefully feed into this and the link was made to the GBSC terms of reference on emerging priorities. The chair concluded that when GBSC comes to review its terms of reference it should think carefully about its relationship with ERFF. It was agreed to raise the issues of national capacity and taxonomy with ERFF and that GBSC would aim to have papers ready for the ERFF meeting in October.

Agenda Item 5: Minutes of the last meeting

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

Agenda Item 6: Actions and matters arising

Andy Stott (Defra) provided an update on Action 2/1 from 2 November. Andy had spoken to Martin Sharman (DG Research, EC) about the possibility of attending a future GBSC meeting. Martin expressed an interest in being involved. Andy and Miles Parker agreed to decide where to include Martin in the work programme.

Richard Ferris (UK BRAG Secretariat) gave an update on Action 5/1 from 2 November. Some work has started within JNCC mapping the Sutherland et al. paper on ecological questions against JNCC priorities. This process could be extended to include GBSC and BRAG research priorities and the DIVERSITAS science plan. It was noted that Madeleine Garlick's replacement will start at Defra on 12 March and that they will be able to assist the Secretariat with this process and provide a report back to the May GBSC meeting.

ACTION 6/1: Secretariat and Defra to map common themes between Sutherland et al. paper and GBSC and BRAG research priorities and the DIVERSITAS science plan. Provide a report to the May GBSC meeting.

Action 6/1 from 2 November regarding the paper on invasive alien species would be carried forward and a revised paper should be produced for review at the May or August GBSC meeting.

ACTION 6/2: JNCC and SE to collect comments from GBSC members on the Invasive Alien Species paper and ascertain whether amendments to the paper are required. Also, to discuss a process for mapping activities of other countries, to identify lead agencies and gaps, and to subsequently review how we are taking these priorities forward.

Agenda Item 7: MA workshop follow-up activities

Sharon McAuslan (Defra) provided an update on the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee's recommendations which, amongst other issues called for DfID, Defra and FCO to work better together overseas. Defra's response to the recommendations is required by 5 March and Sharon is co-ordinating the

response and would welcome comments from GBSC members no later than Friday 16 February.

ACTION 7/1: ALL MEMBERS to forward comments in regard to the EAC recommendations to Sharon McAuslan (Defra) by Friday 16 February.

The group discussed the follow up to the recommendations from the MA workshop. It was agreed that some updating of the paper may be needed, possibility with clarification on what is genuinely new activity emanating from the publication of the MA. Some organisations had yet to respond with information about their activities, notably RBGK, Cefas and the Royal Society.

The group agreed that the paper should be analysed to ascertain whether there are any gaps and if so, how these could be addressed, whether the activity is sufficient and whether all the relevant organisations are involved. A working group should undertake this analysis and this would include Defra, JNCC and the Secretariat plus any other members who would like to be involved.

ACTION 7/2: Secretariat (EM), Defra (SM) and JNCC (MY) to undertake an analysis of the follow up to the recommendations from the MA workshop and provide a synthesis to the May GBSC meeting.

Andy Stott (Defra) provided an update on the consultative process towards an International Mechanism of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity (IMoSEB). Following the initial broad consultations the IMoSEB Executive Committee met in December and produced a paper setting out the needs for the new mechanism. This outlined 8 primary needs with 4 possible options for mechanisms to deliver these needs. This paper is now being consulted on and the International Steering Committee is due to meet in June in advance of SBSTTA to draw conclusions from this second round of consultations.

ACTION 7/3: Defra (AS) to circulate second round consultation papers on IMoSEB for comments. **ALL MEMBERS** to provide comments to AS by end April.

Izabella Kosiell (DfID) noted that there is a Swedish proposal to undertake a national assessment and will circulate information about this to members. Andy Stott reminded members of the CBD decision to review the need for a further MA.

The Chair recommended that a UK position on IMoSEB is developed as soon as possible and suggested that Defra, DfID and JNCC work together on this.

Agenda Item 8: Climate change event

Elizabeth Moore (GBSC Secretariat) gave a brief update on how arrangements for this event were progressing. GBSC members were asked to consider the most appropriate level of representation from their organisation, and notify the Secretariat of the name(s) of their preferred delegate(s) as a matter of urgency.

ACTION 8/1: ALL MEMBERS to notify the Secretariat of the most appropriate representative from their organisation to attend the RS/GBSC biodiversity and climate workshop, by Thursday 15 February.

Agenda Item 9: Conventions paper

Elizabeth Moore (GBSC Secretariat) gave a brief update on behalf of the working group who were asked to consider how to proceed with the conventions paper and report back with a worked up example of the recommended approach. The working group, which was led by Glenys Parry and included Andy Stott, Ian Bainbridge and Marcus Yeo, met in November 2006 and agreed to refine the original conventions paper. The focus is now on the 7 major biodiversity conventions and the revised paper provides summary information about the conventions, responsibility for their delivery and their scientific advisory mechanisms. The paper has been circulated to the UK policy leads and is awaiting information from two contacts.

Members were asked for comments on the paper. It was suggested that once the document is complete it is circulated to members and posted on the GBSC website as an Annex to the Terms of Reference since it sets out the context to the terms the group is working to. It should be periodically reviewed and updated by the Secretariat.

Agenda Item 10: Diary / meeting dates

The date and location for the May meeting have already been agreed: Tuesday 15th May, at the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew.

Arrangements for the August meeting need to be made. The Secretariat will issue a selection of dates for consideration. The venue is to be decided. Both RBGE and DfID offered to host the meeting.

ACTION 10/1: Secretariat to issue a choice of dates for the August meeting, requesting that members state their preferred choice by Thursday 1st March.

ACTION 10/2: Secretariat to discuss the meeting venue with both RBGE and DfID, and notify members of both the date and location by Thursday 8th March.

Agenda Item 11: AOB

The Secretariat reiterated the need for members to contribute items under the standing item concerned with "Emerging Scientific Issues", in order that GBSC should continue to operate in a timely, responsive mode.

ACTION 11/1: All members to give this item consideration, and be prepared to report back to the next GBSC meeting.

Members' attention was drawn to the recent funding announcement issued by BBSRC, concerned with a new Collaborative Scheme for Systematics Research (CoSyst). CoSyst is designed to provide short-term funding for new collaborative research, which will in turn form the basis of novel responsive mode proposals. The scheme will provide funding of £2K to £20K for collaborative projects with a substantial systematic/phylogenetic/taxonomic component.

ACTION 11/2: BBSRC (AR) to provide feedback on the scheme (including an overview of awards made in the 2007 funding round) to the next GBSC meeting.