

# Global Biodiversity Sub-Committee (GBSC)

Meeting papers

## GECC Sub-Committee Minutes

7 November 2007

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**GECC SUB-COMMITTEE ON GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY ISSUES  
MINUTES: 7 November 2007**

*Attendees:*

Miles Parker, Defra  
Andy Stott, Defra  
Colin Clubbe, RBG Kew  
Nick Dulvy, Cefas  
Elizabeth Moore, JNCC (Secretariat)  
Richard Ferris, JNCC (Secretariat)  
Izabella Koziell, DfID  
Vin Fleming, JNCC  
Amanda Read, BBSRC

*Plus guests:*

Tara Pelembe, JNCC  
Alan Whitelaw, Esys

***Agenda Item 1: Introductions and Apologies***

Apologies were received from Sarah Nelson, Defra; Eimear Nic Lughadha, RBG Kew; Chris Baker, NERC; Ian Bainbridge, SE; Shaun Earl, FCO; Eric Blencowe, Defra; Sharon McAuslan, Defra; Gary Grubb, ESRC; Rachel Garthwaite, Royal Society; Mary Gibby, RBGE; Chris Lyal, NHM.

***Agenda Item 2: Review of the GBSC***

Richard Ferris (Secretariat) gave a presentation highlighting the process which the GBSC took in undertaking the Review which was based on the review of the UK BRAG, and the main outcomes which were grouped into four broad themes: Terms of Reference (ToR) and work plan; communication; membership and engaging others; science issues. He suggested that the first step in taking forward the issues raised by the Review would be to form a sub-group to review the ToR and prepare a revised ToR and detailed work programme in draft, for sign-off at the next GBSC meeting.

Alan Whitelaw (Esys) provided feedback from the annual GECC meeting which was held in October. A review of the GECC was proposed to take place during the next year. The work done by the GBSC was praised and Alan offered to circulate the main papers from the GBSC including those on ocean acidification and invasive alien species to the wider GECC as well as post them on the website.

The main GECC and the other GECC sub-groups share the GBSC's concerns about the lack of trace-ability of outcomes to decisions. Alan noted that the main GECC reports to Chief Scientific Advisers' Committee, however there is no actionable reporting and this needs to be addressed. He made reference to the links with the other sub-groups, in particular the Observation sub-group which is considering biodiversity observation systems.

Andy Stott (Defra) reminded the group that there is an outstanding agenda item to invite Andy Shaw (Defra) to report back on the WCMC workshop on earth observation systems, held earlier in the year. It was agreed that this would be looked at when planning the work programme.

**ACTION 2/1: GBSC Secretariat** to make contact with Paul Mason, Chair of Observation sub-group in regard to inviting to a future meeting.

It was noted that the Global Environmental Research Co-ordination sub-group (GER) is producing a review of the gaps and needs in the UK research programme. It was recognised that the GBSC needs to engage with the GER to ensure biodiversity issues are fully covered in this review.

**ACTION 2/2: GBSC Secretariat** to find out date of Peter Liss and Alan Whitelaw's meeting regarding the review of the gaps and needs in the UK research programme and inform Miles Parker. If Miles is unavailable, Secretariat to find a suitable representative from GBSC to attend.

**ACTION 2/3: GBSC Secretariat** to establish a working group to develop a revised ToR (to include communication issues identified in the Review) and work plan and prepare a 'straw man' ToR and an illustrative example of a work plan in time for next GBSC meeting. Group to include Andy Stott (Defra), Richard Ferris and Elizabeth Moore (Secretariat), Miles Parker (Chair), Izabella Koziell (DfID) and one research council representing the others, probably NERC.

**Agenda Item 3: *Minutes of the last meeting***

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

**Agenda Item 4: *Actions and matters arising***

In follow-up to ACTION 7/3 from 15 May 2007, Nick Dulvy (Cefas) will send information from the ICES workshop to Jo Myers (Defra) for consideration in finalising the paper on ocean acidification research priorities.

**ACTION 4/1: Nick Dulvy** (Cefas) to forward information from the ICES workshop to Jo Myers (Defra). **Jo Myers** to incorporate relevant updates and finalise paper on ocean acidification research priorities by 30 November. **Secretariat** to post paper onto the GECC GBSC website and forward to main GECC Secretariat for circulation to wider GECC group.

Vin Fleming (JNCC) provided an update on an outstanding action in regard to the paper on invasive alien species (Action 6/2 from 6 February 2007). It was agreed that the previously proposed suggestion to map activities of other countries to identify lead agencies and gaps and to subsequently review how we are taking these priorities forward would take a considerable amount of time and that the focus should be to incorporate relevant updates and amendments to the paper and post the paper onto the GECC GBSC website as soon as possible.

**ACTION 4/2: Vin Fleming** (JNCC) to incorporate relevant updates and amendments. **Secretariat** to post paper onto the GECC GBSC website and forward to main GECC Secretariat for circulation to wider GECC group.

**Agenda Item 5: *SBSTTA***

Andy Stott (Defra) tabled two papers; Report from the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) 12 for the Convention on Biological Diversity 2 – 6<sup>th</sup> July 2007; SBSTTA thirteenth meeting FAO, Rome, 18-22 February 2008 Provisional Agenda.

It was noted that for future SBSTTA meetings it would be useful to have greater involvement from GBSC on papers in helping to inform the UK position. GBSC members were invited to provide comments on CBD SBSTTA papers which are posted on the CBD website for expert peer review (<http://www.cbd.int/meetings/sbstta-13/review.shtml>). This is an ongoing process and comments should be provided directly to the CBD Secretariat, however it would be useful to receive feedback from members who have provided comments. It was also noted that Defra are considering holding a stakeholder meeting prior to SBSTTA and members agreed that this would be useful.

**Additional Item – Climate change & the contribution of fisheries to poverty alleviation**

Over the lunch-time period, Nick Dulvy (Cefas) provided a presentation on climate change and the contribution of fisheries to poverty alleviation. This work has been funded by the NERC Quest programme and fisheries were used as a case study. However, the analysis could be applied to other natural resources. The presentation will be circulated to GBSC members and posted onto the GECC-GBSC website. Nick will circulate the policy brief which contains the detailed information.

**Agenda Item 6: *Relationships between biodiversity, climate change and human livelihoods***

Izabella Koziell (DfID) provided two presentations, one on how biodiversity issues are handled within DfID and the other, on behalf of Anna Ballance, on the Ecosystem Services for Poverty Alleviation (ESPA) programme. The presentations will be circulated to GBSC members and posted on the GECC-GBSC website.

There are severe limitations within DfID in terms of the biodiversity capacity since only 50% of Izabella's time is allocated to biodiversity issues plus a proportion of Dick Beales' time (the Overseas Territories representative). Furthermore, biodiversity is often perceived within DfID in a very narrow sense to mean rare species and protected areas. Izabella is considering using the term 'ecosystem services and biodiversity' to change the perception and strengthen the argument for the consideration of biodiversity links with poverty.

DfID commissioned an analysis of the impacts of UK non-biodiversity policies on international biodiversity loss and this could help to focus DfID's efforts and may provide opportunities for DfID to work with other Government departments. The future priorities for DfID were identified as the need to revise DfID's policy statement, to link in ecosystem services, work in follow-up to the MA and the ESPA programme, the need to take forward the study of drivers of biodiversity loss and to consider climate and biodiversity links.

GBSC members considered how they could help DfID raise the profile of biodiversity within its remit. It was considered useful to get reflections from GBSC members on what DfID could be doing to sell the message internally of the important relationship between biodiversity and poverty alleviation. It was suggested that GBSC outputs could be fed to the Inter-Ministerial Group on Biodiversity.

**ACTION 6/1: Andy Stott** (Defra) to provide feedback to the GBSC Secretariat on the outcomes of the Inter-ministerial discussion meeting with Joan Ruddock.

**ACTION 6/2: Miles Parker** (Defra) to write to Sir Gordon Conway (DfID), expressing appreciation for Izabella Koziell's contribution to the Group, reiterating the value of DfID involvement.

There was discussion of a possible role for GBSC in the ESPA Programme. If a consultation exercise is carried out following the scoping exercise, then GBSC members felt it would be appropriate for the Group to feed into this. It was noted that many member organisations are already represented on the programme steering committee. A meeting will be held in January 2008, in order to discuss the inception reports and initial findings.

**ACTION 6/3: Izabella Koziell** (DfID) will attend the January meeting of ESPA, and will provide feedback to GBSC at their next meeting. In addition, Izabella to provide the GBSC Secretariat with deadline dates for influencing ESPA (e.g. outputs from the situation analyses).

**ACTION 6/4: Chris Baker** (NERC) to provide a short paper on the links between ESPA, the Living with Environmental Change (LWEC) Programme and other initiatives, for the next GBSC.

**Agenda Item 7: *Priorities for Biodiversity Conservation in the OTs***

Tara Pelembe, Overseas Territories Officer at JNCC, gave a presentation on research priorities for the Overseas Territories (OTs). This was based on a bottom-up assessment of needs, using a questionnaire survey sent to key stakeholders in all 14 OTs. The presentation will be circulated to GBSC members and posted on the GECC-GBSC website.

GBSC members considered the main threats to biodiversity in the OTs to be development, invasive alien species (IAS) and climate change. Based on the OTs' own priorities, using the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) drivers of biodiversity loss, IAS were identified as the primary driver (it was noted that most of the research needs for IAS dealt with current management issues and eradication, rather than preventative measures); with habitat loss due to development the second most important factor. All of the OTs highlighted the need for basic survey and monitoring as the most important activity required.

The importance of this having been a bottom-up approach was recognised. It was noted that the high-level of response to such a consultation was significant, demonstrating a desire on the part of the OTs to feed into the process. This needs to be acknowledged, and GBSC (and members thereof with specific responsibilities for the OTs) should consider what actions are required in order to take forward the identified research needs.

Requirements can be grouped as follows:

- funding
- human resources
- research protocols
- technological resources

The OTs need stronger links with academic institutes, but of greater importance is the need for increased capacity (an increased number of *in situ* research posts). Skill-sharing is likely to be important. Research protocols are needed in order to outline issues such as co-authorship, data standards need to be set, and work needs to be undertaken to improve efficiency of data management.

Some important issues were not highlighted by the OTs consultation, e.g. climate change, valuation of ecosystem services, preventative measures for IAS. In response, it was suggested that GBSC might have a role in addressing gaps in a top-down approach to complement the OTs own needs assessment. This needs to be undertaken with care not to devalue the work of the OTs.

It was recognised that a valuable next step would be to identify actions already underway, addressing these research needs. This information could be fed back to the OTs, particularly which UK universities are active in these areas and where their expertise lies. From this, it might be possible to identify some “quick wins,” in order to encourage buy-in to the process.

Furthermore, the importance of identifying the cost implications of the research needs was highlighted. JNCC is undertaking an exercise to estimate the costs of identified conservation priorities in the OTs. It was noted that it would be valuable to have a discussion on this topic once the data has been further refined.

**ACTION 7/1: Vin Fleming** (JNCC) and **Tara Pelembe** (JNCC) to carry out mapping of current activity onto the research needs, to identify significant gaps and the current UK and OTs resource commitments; a report to be prepared for the next GBSC Meeting.

**ACTION 7/2: GBSC Secretariat** to identify funding opportunities for the OTs, particularly focusing on the Research Councils (to be asked for clarification of eligibility criteria), and report back to the next GBSC Meeting.

Although a similar review for the UK’s Crown Dependencies (CDs) would be useful, it was noted that the CDs fall under the jurisdiction of UK BRAG.

**ACTION 7/3: GBSC Secretariat** to raise with UK BRAG (meeting on 04/12/07) the idea of a biodiversity conservation research needs exercise for the CDs.

The issue of biodiversity conservation research in the OTs needs to be put onto the agenda for a future meeting of the Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group on Biodiversity, where a paper on costed conservation priorities will be presented.

**ACTION 7/4: Eric Blencowe** (Defra) to raise the issue of biodiversity conservation research in the OTs at a future meeting of the Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group on Biodiversity and to provide a report back to the GBSC at the next appropriate opportunity.

**Agenda Item 8: *Analysis of Recommendations from the MA workshop***

Andy Stott (Defra) introduced his paper on the review of actions taken to follow up the recommendations from the GBSC MA workshop held 3 February 2006 (GECC GBSC (07)13). It was noted that the actions reported are probably incomplete, however this paper could usefully inform the work that the CBD Secretariat is undertaking in reviewing the follow-up to the MA.

**ACTION 8/1: GBSC Secretariat** to send a reminder to all GBSC members to check the paper on the MA workshop recommendations follow-up activity (GECC GBSC (07)13) and provide an update of relevant actions with which they are involved to Andy Stott by 23 November.

Andy Stott identified some further follow-up actions including consideration of a workshop to review global biodiversity modelling, scenarios and futures methods and application to policy and global goals and targets beyond 2010. It was agreed that Andy should work up the brief for this and include budget considerations, and consider the role of DfID and the ESPA programme and Fiona Lickorish (Defra).

**ACTION 8/2: Andy Stott** (Defra) to work up a proposal for a futures workshop, to include budget considerations and report back to a future GBSC meeting.

GBSC members discussed the possibility of establishing a contact group to follow and advise Defra and DfID on international developments in sub-global assessments and proposals for future global assessments.

**ACTION 8/3: GBSC Secretariat** to collate names of volunteers to join a contact group to consider developments in sub-global assessments and proposals for future global assessments.

**Agenda Item 9: UK BRAG report**

Richard Ferris (JNCC) provided a brief update from UK BRAG. No follow-up actions were required.

**Agenda Item 10: Diary/meeting dates**

Given the proposal to review the ToR and produce a revised ToR plus a draft work programme in time for the next GBSC meeting it was agreed that the Secretariat would trawl for a date following the initial meeting of the working group preparing the drafts. It would most likely be in February or March 2008.

**Agenda Item 11: AOB**

Nick Dulvy (Cefas) referred to Bill Sutherland's work on identifying the top biodiversity loss factors. Although this exercise focussed on the UK, Nick thought there may be some issues of global relevance. It was suggested the Nick identify issues for global concern for consideration at a future GBSC meeting.