

Global Biodiversity Sub-Committee (GBSC)

Meeting papers

Executive Summary

3 March 2009

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**GECC SUB-COMMITTEE ON GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY ISSUES
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
ISSUES ARISING AT 3 MARCH 2009**

Ground Level Ozone

Professor David Fowler, CEH, gave a presentation on the impacts of ground level ozone (O₃) on global biodiversity and ecosystem services and functioning. Following a substantive discussion it was noted that there is little research on taxa other than plants and that biodiversity research is clearly an important gap. Details of the issue will be conveyed to the UK BRAG with the suggestion for the creation of an expert sub-group to formulate the next steps in terms of research priorities.

GBSC and the Royal Society have each submitted notification to the Convention on Biological Diversity on O₃ as a new and emerging issue. The process and timetable for bringing O₃ to the attention of the CBD will be clarified.

It was noted that O₃ impacts on a range of different policy areas including food security, climate change, biodiversity and developing countries. Defra will convene a meeting and invite David Fowler and the Royal Society to provide a seminar to a number of key representatives from different policy groups.

Informing MEAs

The Secretariat has begun making links with leads from the key MEAs in order to be better informed of the outcomes of the main meetings and be more effective at influencing the decisions and direction of the MEAs. Most progress has been made with the Ramsar Convention and it was agreed to invite representatives from the Ramsar Secretariat and UK delegation to a future GBSC meeting.

It was noted that the JNCC will be holding an MEA feedbacks event on 20 May in London. This one-day workshop aims to cascade information from recent major MEA meetings and work up key messages to take to all the conventions. The workshop will be organised around 5 key themes: invasive alien species and wildlife diseases; island issues (OTs and Crown Dependencies); energy and biodiversity; climate change; and ecosystem services. Invitations will be issued to all GBSC members.

Gaps and emerging science issues

Members raised a number of issues under this agenda item, and it was agreed that individuals would prepare information papers to further scope the issues and consider the links to global biodiversity for presentation at a future GBSC meetings. Issues raised were as follows:

- Decline in amphibians and links with climate change
- Geo-engineering
- Nanotechnology
- Synthetic biology
- Bioclimate – an information repository

GECC Review

DECC commissioned a review of the GECC in 2008, and the results of the review have been circulated to GECC and GECC-sub group members for comments. DECC will draft a short paper on the recommendations following the comments and circulate this prior to the main GECC meeting on 5 May 2009. Essentially the review highlighted that the current structure and reporting line of main GECC was not effective, although some of the sub-groups, notably GBSC were considered to have good impacts horizontally. A number of options were

outlined for the future, including distributing responsibility of main GECC function and changing the reporting lines to respective Secretaries of State, depending on the topics covered.

During substantive discussion GBSC considered three questions:

1. Was the review comprehensive? What was missing?
2. What is the favoured option for GECC and GBSC?
3. How should GBSC respond?

A report on this discussion was submitted to DECC to feed into their paper on the recommendations, prior to the main GECC meeting. A copy of the report can be found on the JNCC website.