

Global Biodiversity Sub-Committee (GBSC)

Meeting papers

Executive Summary

13 July 2009

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**GECC SUB-COMMITTEE ON GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY ISSUES
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
ISSUES ARISING AT 13 JULY 2009**

GECC Global Environmental Research (GER) Coordination Research Priorities Review

The group discussed the action that had arisen at the 14th Meeting of the GECC in May 2009, which charged the GBSC with reviewing the GER report, and to consider producing an equivalent report on the ecosystem services and biodiversity issues not addressed by it. The GBSC favoured the option of editing the existing document to include GBSC outputs and make it a more complete review rather than producing a separate document.

The GBSC Secretariat was given the action of producing a revised draft GER report, incorporating conclusions on key biodiversity issues addressed at GBSC meetings in order to ensure the review adequately covers biodiversity and ecosystem services issues. This will be circulated to GBSC members for comments at the end of August, for submission to the Chair by mid-September.

Earth Observation Initiatives

Lawrence Way from JNCC gave a presentation on earth observation initiatives (EO), including satellite data. These can provide a huge resource of high resolution time series data. Many areas in the world are undergoing large scale changes in land cover, some rich in biodiversity but poor in terms of funding and skills available to tap into such initiatives. EO can provide images and data which can be compared from different seasons to detect land use changes. However, there is a gap between the drivers of EO and the users of the data derived from the initiatives. The gap was identified as a skills gap for local community users. Further barriers to the uptake of EO include cost and support issues, along with a lack of awareness of the benefits within the global biodiversity community.

It was concluded that there are many global issues which could benefit from EO but that it goes beyond biodiversity and therefore the GBSC is not necessarily the right place to proceed with the debate. It was agreed that the Chair will raise the issue with the main GECC for further consideration.

Sutherland papers^{1, 2}

The GBSC considered two papers published by William Sutherland et. al. on novel threats and opportunities facing UK biodiversity and one hundred questions of importance to the conservation of global biodiversity. The GBSC has already discussed a number of the issues in the papers in previous meetings, for example ocean acidification and invasive species. It was suggested that the GBSC could consider what other issues remain and how to prioritise them.

A number of actions were assigned to various GBSC members to cross-check activity within their organisations against the Sutherland papers and to report any gaps to the Secretariat, who will collate the information and prepare a summary report for GBSC.

¹ *Future novel threats and opportunities facing UK biodiversity identified by horizon scanning*, Journal of Applied Ecology 2008, 45, 821-833

² *One hundred questions of importance to the conservation of global biological diversity*, Conservation Biology 2009

Multilateral Environmental Agreement workshop

The JNCC hosted a one-day event on 20 May 2009 with the aim of looking at cross-cutting themes across a number of the key biodiversity conventions. The outcomes were the evidence and research needs for each thematic area that will help inform the UK at future MEA meetings. It was a successful event with 85 delegates from government agencies, departments and NGOs. However, there was minimal engagement from the academic community and the research councils. As such, the outcomes were biased towards policy evidence needs. It was none-the-less a useful event which enabled free and open debate between policy makers and it was agreed that more of these events should be held in the future. All the briefing papers, presentations, reports from the working groups and outcomes will be posted onto the JNCC website³.

³ <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-4663>