

UK Biodiversity Partnership
Standing Committee

UKBSC/02/2
Terms of reference and membership
of Standing Committee

5 September 2002

TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP OF UK BIODIVERSITY STANDING COMMITTEE.

1. The Standing Committee is referred to in the following terms by the Government Response to the MBR:

A small UK Biodiversity Standing Committee, will be set up and chaired by the Director of Wildlife, Countryside and Flood Management of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The Standing Committee should prepare issues for consideration by the UK Partnership, and steer and provide the context for the work of any sub-groups and other supporting mechanisms, such as the Biodiversity Information Service of the JNCC and the Secretariat. The Chairs of the four Country Biodiversity Groups should be standing members of the Committee, as should representatives of the four country nature conservation agencies. This core membership should ensure that the views of the country partnerships are represented and that the group retains its strong biodiversity focus. A small number of other representatives from the partnership as a whole should be invited to join the Standing Committee. It will be important for the Standing Committee to ensure that the UKBAP remains relevant and dynamic, and so the Committee should ensure that its membership, whilst remaining small enough to be business-like, is appropriate and necessary according to the current business of the partnership.

2. In the light of this steer, proposed draft **terms of reference** for the Standing Committee are as follows:

In the light of paragraph 5.7 of the MBR, which set out the issues that needed to be co-ordinated at UK level, the Standing Committee's role is:-

- To guide and support the whole UK Biodiversity Partnership in implementing the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.
- To enable the Country Biodiversity Groups to exchange information, experience, guidance and best practice.
- To oversee the maintenance of systems to support and report on a common set of UK Habitat and Species Action Plans, setting up sub-groups as necessary
- To steer the work of the UK Biodiversity Research Platform.
- To prepare issues for consideration and discussion at the annual conference of the UK Biodiversity Partnership.

3. The **core membership** of the Standing Committee, under the DEFRA chair, consists of the Chairs of the four Country Biodiversity Groups and one representative from each of the four UK nature conservation statutory agencies. In the light of the substantial role played by the voluntary conservation sector in the implementation of the UK BAP, (e.g. as lead partners for over 60% of the SAPs), the organisations represented by Wildlife and Countryside Link have an important place on the Standing Committee. There are two representatives at this meeting. It is also assumed that the

Chairs of any sub-groups would be present at meetings where relevant items were on the Agenda.

4. It is for consideration whether the membership of the Committee should be extended to include a wider range of organisations involved in the UK Biodiversity Partnership and whether this can be done in a way which covers the whole UK but does not lead to the Committee's becoming unwieldy in size. Both the MBR and the Government response stressed the need for the Committee to be small and manageable.
5. The main options seem to be:
 - To seek to become inclusive and representative across the UK, which is likely to lead to a Committee of greater size than the old UKBG;
 - To identify a small number of key bodies (e.g those representing the land management sector) and to ask them to be prepared to represent their sector UK-wide.
 - To maintain a core membership and rely on the extended membership of the Partnership and the Country Groups (who's Chairs are members of the Standing Committee *ex officio*) to secure inclusiveness.
 - As bullet 3 above, but to extend attendance ad hoc as and when the issues under consideration require it.
6. The Standing Committee is invited to discuss and agree Terms of Reference and Membership in the light of the proposals and options set out above.

**UK Biodiversity Secretariat
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