

**UK Biodiversity Reporting and Information Group**  
**4<sup>th</sup> Meeting – Defra offices Temple Quay House, Bristol**  
**7 September 2004 - 11h15**  
**FINAL MINUTES**

**Present:** John Baxter (SNH); Joanna Drewitt (Species and Habitat Review Sub-group/SE); Hilary Allison (WCL); Pete Brotherton (Targets Sub-group/EN); Fiona Mettam (Defra); Sarah Webster (Defra); Trish Fretten (WAG); Liz Howe (CCW); Julian Hughes (WCL); Robin Wynde (2005 reporting Sub-group/WCL); Ant Maddock (JNCC); Paul Rose (JNCC); Judith Young (SNH).

**Apologies:** Mike Meharg (EHS); Deryck Steer (JNCC); Jim Munford (NBNT)

**1. Welcome and apologies**

Fiona Mettam from Defra was welcomed as a new member of BRIG.

**2. Final acceptance of minutes of last meeting**

Minutes were accepted without change.

**3. Actions from previous BRIG meeting (see attached)**

All actions had been completed or on the agenda. A report of the third meeting of the UK Biodiversity Indicators Forum held at JNCC on Tuesday 6 July 2004, as well as the papers presented at this meeting can be found on the JNCC website (Action 14 of January minutes)

<http://www.jncc.gov.uk/ukbg2/indicators/forum/3/default.htm>

**4. Feedback from Sub-groups and other work since last meeting**

**4.1 2005 Reporting Sub-group (Paper BRIG0904\_1\_2005 Reporting)**

Robin summarised the 2005 Reporting Round report and said that consideration of data analysis and gathering data from sources other than Lead Partners and LBAPs would be dealt with at forthcoming sub-group meetings. Robin also mentioned that there was no Scottish representative on this group and would discuss this with John outside of the meeting. .

It was planned that the 2005 questions would be asked at a UK and, wherever appropriate, a country level. In planning the analysis the group would look at what work would be carried out to a UK level and what analysis would be done to a country level and make this information available to the country groups so they could plan their work. Trish noted that the 2005 Reporting Round results would be useful in helping Wales formulate future ideas.

**ACTION 1:** THE 2005 REPORTING SUB-GROUP TO CARRY ON WITH THE WORK AND REPORT BACK TO BRIG ON PROGRESS ON BROADER QUESTIONS AND PLANNING THE ANALYSIS.

**ACTION 2:** ROBIN TO LIAISE WITH JOHN TO IDENTIFY A SCOTTISH REPRESENTATIVE ON THE 2005 REPORTING SUB GROUP.

#### 4.2 Species and Habitat Priorities Review Group

Joanna summarised the Species and Habitat Review report that she handed out. She said that all taxonomic groups are not at the same stage in terms of the data they have. This makes an *en bloc* start and end period for this review difficult.

Joanna said the group needed guidance from BRIG on who signs off the Stage 1 criteria. After some discussion it was agreed that the Review Group had the expertise to determine these criteria. BRIG would want to see the results of this scientific review. There is some urgency with this because Scotland would like the results of Stage 1 by the end of 2005 to enable them to produce a list of species as required by the Nature Conservation Act (Scotland) 2004.

It was also considered whether or not Stages 2 and 3 should be addressed at a UK or country level. The sub-group had not finalised what would be included in Stages 2 and 3. There was general agreement that Stages 1, 2 and 3 should be carried out at a UK level. Countries to continue to keep BRIG up to date with their activities in this area.

No-one felt that the deadlines could not be met. It was agreed that we cannot take our time to produce a near perfect list, but that it is better to do the best we can within the current timetable.

**ACTION 3:** JOANNA TO EMAIL THE SPECIES AND HABITAT REVIEW SUB-GROUP REPORT TO SECRETARIAT.

**ACTION 4:** THE SPECIES AND HABITAT REVIEW SUB-GROUP TO CONTINUE WITH THEIR WORK PROGRAMME TO FINALISE THE CRITERIA AND INITIATE STAGE 1 OF THE REVIEW.

**ACTION 5:** THE SPECIES AND HABITAT REVIEW SUB-GROUP TO PREPARE FOR THE STANDING COMMITTEE BY THE NEXT MEETING IN OCTOBER THE AIM OF STAGES 2 AND 3, SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW PROPOSALS WILL BE ASSESSED AND RATIFIED, GIVE AN IDEA OF WHAT THE RESULTS MAY LOOK LIKE AND A TIMELINE.

#### 4.3 Targets Review Sub-group (Paper BRIG0904\_2\_Targets)

Pete referred to the Lead Partner Target Guidance Note that members had seen previously. He identified three new items in the Guidance Note relating directly to BRIG that BRIG had not seen before and the approval of these items was requested. These were:

- The next complete targets review would be in approximately 2015 (Section 1 item 4.6).
- The Targets sub-group has offered support to Lead Partners in setting new types of targets (e.g. targets improving resilience or cross-plan targets, see Section 2 item 2.2.3). Approval for this role is sought from BRIG.
- There are two dates over the next two years when BRIG needs to sign off work that will have been completed by the Targets sub group (September - October 2005 and April - May 2006). BRIG was requested to organise meetings to coincide with these dates if possible.

The meeting gave approval for the first two items and agreed to try to organise meetings to coincide with the dates requested by the Targets Sub-group.

Trish then said that Wales was not happy with paragraph 3.3 of the Guidance Note which said that "the BAP targets should be set at country level wherever possible" and that this should be "summed up to provide a total UK target". This described a very top down approach, in any case Wales might disagree

with the assessments made by the Lead Partners and a preferred approach was for Wales to assess what "contribution" it could make to the overall UK target. As biodiversity is a devolved matter - each country should be free to decide its delivery mechanism and therefore whether or not to have targets in Wales is for Wales to decide. Wales was keen to do its bit – but did not want the document to say that each country would definitely have a target especially not one apparently set by others. Trish agreed however that assessing the Welsh contribution would be helped by discussion with Lead Partners and information on a disaggregated basis.

Trish also said that Wales is currently developing a high level Environment Strategy that should be ready next year but it was unlikely to go into the detail of Species or Habitat Action Plans. The detailed actions were likely to follow on from the high level strategy.

Referring back to earlier discussions about the role of the "Country Groups" Trish said that references to "Country Biodiversity Groups" and "Country Groups" were not accurate. It was suggested that "biodiversity decision-taking mechanisms in the countries" was better. She asked if the text in the Guidance Note could be changed to accommodate these concerns and was happy that the changes to the text in respect of country level targets could be made by the acting Chair of BRIG (Paul).

**ACTION 6:** PETE AND PAUL TO ALTER THE TEXT OF THE TARGET GUIDANCE NOTE TO ACCOMMODATE THE CONCERNS OF WALES BEFORE SENDING THE NOTE OUT TO LEAD PARTNERS. SEE ALSO ACTION 7.

#### 4.4 Timing of the reviews and reporting work (Paper BRIG0904\_3\_Timings & timeline)

Ant presented the excel spreadsheet of the combined timelines of the two reviews and the 2005 reporting round. It was noted that Lead Partners need to be made more aware of this timeline and the large amount of work that was expected of them in the next two years.

**ACTION 7:** PETE TO SEND OUT THE ARTICLE TO LEAD PARTNERS THAT APPEARED IN BIODIVERSITY NEWS AND DETAILED THE WORK LEAD PARTNERS NEED TO DO ON THE TWO REVIEWS AND FOR THE 2005 REPORTING ROUND. THIS ARTICLE TO BE SENT TO LEAD PARTNERS WITH THE GUIDANCE NOTE (SEE ACTION 6) AND A COVERING LETTER WRITTEN BY PAUL.

#### 4.5 Dealing with the 2002 Information Gap (Paper BRIG0904\_4\_Info gap & appendix)

Ant presented a summary of the Information Gap paper that had been circulated with the minutes. The following points were made in response to this:

- BRIG needs to go to the Standing Committee with recommendations of how to fill the information gaps
- The present paper was not clear about the information gaps and its presentation could be improved to convey the message better (e.g. remove from the appendix species that do not have gaps such as the otter; reassess those that have failed to fill in UK assessments but have assessments for the countries they occur in, summarise the results in taxonomic form)
- We need to give more prominence to the cases where Lead Partners have specifically listed lack of monitoring or survey as a constraint to achieving plan targets

- There was a need for information and Lead Partners to be brought together better
- There was probably no further detailed analyses (other than those identified above) that could be done without compromising the data
- Resources to continue this work were limited

It was then proposed that a three stage approach be recommended to the Standing Committee.

1. In the short term, Lead Partners who had recorded survey and monitoring as a constraint or a limitation to their plans be identified and contacted by telephone
2. In the medium term, a process be identified investigate if existing information can be used to fill the information gaps identified in the paper presented today
3. In the longer term, whether existing schemes could be enhanced or new monitoring and survey programmes should be developed as a means of filling the information gaps.

Paul acknowledged that this paper would have to be agreed by e mail correspondence.

**ACTION 8:** ANT TO DEVELOP THIS INFORMATION GAP PROPOSAL, TO CIRCULATE IT TO BRIG FOR APPROVAL AND TO SEND IT TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE IN TIME FOR THEIR MEETING ON 13 OCTOBER 2004.

## 5. Standing items

### 5.1 Country groups (Paper BRIG0904\_5\_country reports)

Reports from England and Scotland were received.

### 5.2 BRAG (Paper BRIG0904\_6\_BRAG activities)

The second page of the BRAG report was questioned and the links between BRIG and the BRAG monitoring sub-group was queried. It was replied that the level at which BRAG addressed issues was at a high research level and there was limited overlap between this BRAG monitoring sub-group and the 2005 reporting round. However there was more overlap between this work of BRAG and the Species and Habitat Review, which showed a clear opportunity for a BRIG / BRAG liaison that was not present at the moment.

### 5.3 NBN (Paper BRIG0904\_7\_NBN report)

The NBN paper was circulated at the meeting.

## 6. New items

### 6.1 UK BAP website

The new UK BAP website was launched in April 2004 and it appeared that users were happy with the new site. There were about 26 000 hits per week but this included search engines.

**ACTION 9:** ANT TO SEND OUT THE ANALYSIS OF THE EMAILS SENT TO UK BAP WEBSITE.

### 6.2 Partnership Meeting 2004, Cardiff.

Not covered at this meeting.

6.3 Discussion on how to factor in the impact of climate change and ecosystem approach into the UK BAP revision process (Paper BRIG0904\_8\_climate change)

Hilary asked the meeting to focus on the five recommendations made in the workshop report (January 2005) on climate change and the UK BAP that was circulated prior to the meeting.

Generally, the meeting supported the need for consideration of climate change in biodiversity conservation but a number of issues suggested that BRIG may not be the best group to do this:

- climate change is a large programme that may be beyond the capabilities of BRIG
- there are limited resources within BRIG to do this work
- other groups (e.g. agriculture; Environment Agency; Global Environmental Change Programme) are engaged in climate change work, and biodiversity climate change work may lag behind
- climate change is being considered by Scotland and England

Other issues were raised by the group:

- The Targets Sub-group met members of Monarch who gave a paper on their climate change work. Monarch want to send a paper to Lead Partners outlining which habitats are likely to change as a result of climate change and how.
- If this paper on habitats goes out work done by MarClim dealing with the marine environment should go out at the same time.
- An important recommendation of the meeting to discuss climate change and the UK BAP was to formulate better links between climate change researchers and biodiversity practitioners.
- Climate change is being considered by the sub-groups and it is necessary to know which targets have been set to account for climate change and which species or habitats are chosen as priorities because of the threat of climate change.
- Responses to climate change include developing cross-cutting plans, promoting habitat and landscape connectivity, planning a more resilient countryside *etc.* All examples of good conservation practice that should be included into UK BAP.
- What can current BRIG reviews do to include climate change?
- How can climate change thinking be delivered through BRIG?
- How will this work be resources in BRIG?

**ACTION 10:** HILARY TO SET UP A SUB-GROUP TO CONSIDER THESE ISSUES AND QUESTIONS AND TO PRESENT THESE TO BRIG AT THE NEXT MEETING.

**ACTION 11:** HILARY TO CONTACT ANDY STOTT ABOUT BEING NOMINATED TO THIS GROUP.

**ACTION 12:** EN, SNH AND CCW TO SEND THE NAMES OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THIS SUB-GROUP TO HILARY.

**ACTION 13:** JOHN TO SEND COPIES OF THE SNH PUBLICATION ON ECOLOGICAL NETWORKS TO PAUL WHO WILL SEND THESE COPIES TO MEMBERS REQUESTING THEM.

2005 Reporting round questions (Paper BRIG0904\_9\_2005 questions)

Robin

Robin summarised the paper that was circulated with the minutes. He said that Question 7e had been omitted from the paper by mistake and that this read "Did you refer to LBAP data when compiling this report?"

In addition, he had now had feedback from BRAG on Lead Partner question 3 dealing with knowledge since the paper was sent to BRIG and BRAG agreed with the question and requested that the following be added: "If you feel more research is required on your species or habitat, please give details."

Robin then asked if the following question should be asked: "Should you continue being Lead Partner for this priority species/habitat? If not, who would you recommend?" He suggested that if we did want to include this question we would need to be sure that there was some system in place for dealing with recommended changes. After some discussion it was agreed that this question be added.

The questions for the 2005 Reporting round were approved by BRIG.

**ACTION 14:** ROBIN AND THE 2005 SUB-GROUP TO DO SOME TRIALS OF THESE QUESTIONS.

**ACTION 15:** ANT TO SEND THE WEB ADDRESS OF BARS TO BRIG MEMBERS.

6.4 Target costings

Sarah/Pete

Not covered at this meeting.

6.5 Other BRIG work – looking forward (Paper BRIG0904\_10\_looking forward)

Paul

Not covered at this meeting.

## 7. Next meeting

7.1 22 November 2004, Bristol.

Regus building (next door to Defra Temple Quay) 11.15- 16h00.

## **BRIG 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting 7 September 2004 - 11h15**

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