

UK Biodiversity Reporting and Information Group

6th Meeting –Ergon House, London

8 February 2005, 11h30 – 16h30

FINAL MINUTES

Present: Marcus Yeo (Chair, JNCC), Ant Maddock (Secretariat, JNCC), Robin Wynde (LINK), Judith Young (SE), Sarah Webster (Defra), Wendy Twell (WAG), Liz Howe (CCW), Pete Brotherton (EN).

Hilary Allison arrived at lunch time.

1. Apologies:

Dreyck Steer (JNCC), Paul Rose (JNCC), Joanna Drewitt (SE); John Baxter (SMH); Jim Munford (NBN); Mike Meharg (DOENI); Richard Weyl (DOENI); Julian Hughes (LINK), Brigid Primrose (SNH), Trish Fretten (WAG) Marcus was asked to pass best wishes from the group to Deryck.

2. Final acceptance of minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting on 22 November 2004 were accepted without change.

3. Actions from previous BRIG meeting (see attached)

All actions were completed or were on the agenda.

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

4.1 Format of BRIG's recommendations to the Standing Committee

It was noted that the Standing Committee needed an update of the work of BRIG with recommendations, not questions, on how BRIG would proceed. BRIG agreed to do this. A summary of the points to be included in the paper to the Standing Committee is contained in Agenda item 4.10.

4.2 Information Gap Sub-group (BRIG0205_1_Info gap)

Habitats

The Red, Amber, Green information on the priority habitats was available for England, Northern Ireland and Scotland with information from Wales expected soon. Once all the information was available, Pete could finalise the report within a few weeks.

ACTION 1: PETE TO GET THE HABITAT DATA FROM WALES AND PREPARE THE FINAL REPORT

Species

Ant reported that 32 of 75 (80%) Lead Partners reporting monitoring constraints in 2002 said the constraint was still unresolved. A further brief analysis of these 32 Lead Partners showed that 19 were due to lack of adequate resources and 7 stated that their species were particularly difficult to find.

BRIG agreed that this work should be completed as soon as possible.

ACTION 2: THE INFORMATION GAP SUB-GROUP TO ANALYSE THE SPECIES DATA FURTHER (E.G. LOOK AT TAXONOMIC, GEOGRAPHIC, AGENCY AND LEAD PARTNER PATTERNS) IN TIME FOR SUBMISSION TO THE NEXT STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING ON 9 MARCH 2005.

4.3 2005 Reporting Sub-group Report (BRIG0205_2_2005 Reporting)

Robin reported that the 2005 Reporting Round Lead Partners and LBAP Guidance Note was sent out on Friday 4 February 2005.

ACTION 3: ANT TO PUT THE 2005 REPORTING ROUND LEAD PARTNERS AND LBAP GUIDANCE NOTE ONTO THE UK BAP WEBSITE

ACTION 4: ROBIN TO DO AN ARTICLE ON THE 2005 REPORTING ROUND FOR BIODIVERSITY NEWS

4.4 2005 Reporting Sub-group Questions (BRIG0205_3_2005 Questions)

These questions had been seen and approved by BRIG and were included for reference for item 4.5.

Wider questions (e.g. dealing with SSSIs, agri-environment schemes *etc.*) were being considered by the sub-group and would be included in the report to BRIG for the next meeting.

4.5 2005 Reporting Sub-group Analysis (BRIG0205_4_Analysis)

- All questions would be analysed to a country level where possible
- Reference needed to be made in the paper that the data on trends and on target progress would help in the assessment of progress towards the WSSD target (to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on earth) as well as assess progress towards the Gothenburg target (of halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010).
- Wherever possible, data of relevance to priority species or habitats (e.g. on agri-environment scheme delivery, or protection on statutory sites) should be directed to Lead Partners to enable integrated reporting and would not be reported separately.
- Two products from the 2005 Reporting Round were envisaged; a published report (including information indicated in bold in the paper; BRIG0205_4_Analysis) and a more detailed web report (including all information in the paper).
- After discussion, it was agreed that the 2005 reporting round analysis should be published separately from any report summarising the Targets Review and the Species and Habitat Review
- The 2005 UK BAP report would be published by mid 2006

ACTION 5: ROBIN TO EDIT THE FIRST PAGE OF THE ANALYSIS PAPER (BRIG0205_4_ANALYSIS) AS SUGGESTED BY BRIG

ACTION 6: THE REPORT TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE TO HAVE THE GUIDANCE NOTE, QUESTIONS AND ANALYSIS PAPERS ANNEXED.

4.6 Climate change Sub-group (BRIG0205_5_Climate change)

The formation of this sub-group arose from a BRIG discussion on 7 September 2004 which referred to a meeting in Bristol about climate change and UK BAP priorities. The involvement of the country agencies in the first meeting of the Climate change Sub-group was acknowledged.

Terms of Reference

BRIG approved the Terms of Reference with one small change. BRIG agreed that it was important to focus this sub-group onto UK BAP. The role of the sub-group should be to form links with other climate change groups and initiatives, and interpret climate change information for use by the UK BAP community.

ACTION 7: HILARY TO EDIT THE CLIMATE CHANGE SUB-GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

Issues referred to BRIG

Ten points arising from the first meeting of the Climate Change Sub-group were referred to BRIG. After discussion, the following was agreed.

- (i) Accepted
- (ii) – (iii) Referred to the Targets Sub-group who would work closely with the Climate Change Sub-group as the Targets Review process can incorporate information on climate change throughout the year
- (v) Reference to the bullets on page 7 of the Climate Change paper_(BRIG0205_5_Climate change) be added to the Species and Habitat Review Guidance Note to get people to consider climate change.
- (vi) & (vii) Approved. A simple-English paper outlining the principles of climate change would be of use to the UK BAP partnership. This paper would incorporate information obtained through the sub-group's links to other climate change groups. BRIG recognised that these two tasks could form the basis of a work programme for the sub group.
- (viii) There was time for Lead Partners to be given information on climate change (e.g. changes in phenology) by September 2005 and for this to be incorporated into the 2005 Reporting Round.
- (ix) This issue was seen as part of the new Terms of Reference to link with other groups dealing in climate change issues.
- (x) A policy group is needed to do the work suggested in this issue. But it was noted that there is no policy group under the Standing Committee. This needs more thought.

ACTION 8: HILARY TO UPDATE THE ISSUES / TASKS LISTED ABOVE

ACTION 9: THE CLIMATE CHANGE SUB-GROUP TO SCOPE THE WORK FOR PUBLISHING A GUIDE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

4.7 Species and Habitat Priorities Review Sub-group Outline of the staged review

Ant summarised the Species and Habitat Priorities Review process and mentioned the review would be conducted in three Stages.

Stage 1 was objective, based on scientific criteria and data (where available). This Stage would produce a Candidate list of species and habitats. The group felt that because this list would include species and habitats of a certain level of conservation significance, it should be given some status and "List of UK threatened species and habitats" was used temporarily.

Stage 2 would determine if there was any reason why conservation action could not or should not be taken on the Candidates. Reasons could include lack of knowledge, lack of resources or other practical issues. These practical considerations would be used to prioritise the Candidate list. Robin suggested that further clarification of what stage 2 (and 3) actually consisted of was needed.

Stage 3 involved developing implementation mechanisms for the top priorities arising from Stage 2. Emphasis was on integrated action using a range of policy actions, grouped plans, taxonomic or ecologically functional plans, grouping species and habitats with similar threats or single action plans *etc.*

Ant further pointed out that three separate groups would be analysed using this three stage process. These were Terrestrial and freshwater Species, Terrestrial and Freshwater Habitats, and Marine Species and Habitats.

ACTION 10: BRIG AGREED THAT THE PSHRWG SHOULD CONTINUE ITS WORK ON STAGES 1 - 3

ACTION 11: BRIG AGREED THAT THE PSHRWG SHOULD RECONSIDER ITS COMPOSITION ONCE STAGE 1 HAD BEEN COMPLETED

The paper from the Species and Habitat Priorities Review Sub-group contained a number of requests and these were dealt with as follows:

Stage 1

- It should be made more clear that the candidate list was to be given some status such as by using a term like “List of UK threatened species and habitats”
- BRIG agreed to coordinate the approval of the candidate list by sending it via BRIG and the Standing Committee to the countries for their consideration.
- Once approved, BRIG agreed to publish the Candidate list

Stage 2

- Stage 2 be conducted at a UK level
- Countries may identify additional species and habitats that are of particular priority for their area, but these should be listed separately, named separately and not added to the UK Candidate list
- Scientific input was needed at this Stage but there will also be a need for more policy expertise in the group. There was a suggestion that the group dealing with Stage 2 may need to be smaller (refer to Action 11)
- The same Candidate list from Stage 1 should come out of Stage 2 but with priorities attached to each species and habitat
- BRIG will comment on the emerging priority lists

Stage 3

- Management of this stage should be similar to Stage 2
- Although Stage 3 will be conducted at a UK level, even more country involvement is needed and BRIG will ask the countries the level of involvement the countries will want
- The establishment of working groups to investigate how to develop integrated implementation mechanisms was supported
- Although the country derived lists should be kept separate from the UK derived lists in Stage 2, delivery mechanisms that incorporated species from both lists could be considered in Stage 3.

There was discussion of a Stage 4 in which the responsibilities for the delivery mechanisms were identified, Lead Partners selected, actions written and targets set.

ACTION 12: THE GUIDANCE NOTE FOR STAGE 1 TO GO OUT BY THE END OF FEBRUARY IF AT ALL POSSIBLE.

4.8 Targets Review Sub-group Report (BRIG0205_6_Targets)

Pete reported that the next Targets Group meeting would be held in April 2005 and that Lead Partners were feeding information on targets to the Chair and secretariat of this sub-group. It was noted that incorrect email addresses of the Lead Partners were causing problems. BRIG agreed that this was a task for Defra and Sarah agreed to resolve the problem.

ACTION 13: SARAH TO INVESTIGATE HOW TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM OF KEEPING LEAD PARTNERS' AND LBAPS' CONTACTS UP-TO-DATE

4.9 Update on costings work (BRIG0205_7_Costings)

The main driver for this work is that a ballpark cost for meeting the targets is required by ministers. Comments on this paper can still be sent to Sarah. One issue that is unresolved in the paper deals with the updating of old habitat costs versus the need to redo the costs from scratch. The contractors will be asked to advise on this.

The costings work was designed to coincide, as far as possible, with the Targets Review that is underway.

4.10 Summary of recommendations to the Standing Committee

A summary of the points to be raised in the BRIG paper to the Standing Committee follows:

ACTION 14: UPDATE THE TIMELINE OF REVIEWS AND 2005 REPORTING AND REFER TO ACTIONS BEYOND 2006 AT EACH BRIG MEETING

Information Gap

- More analyses to be done (e.g. taxon, geographic, agency and Lead Partner patterns).

2005 report

- 2005 Guidance Note has gone out. Annex the Guidance Note to the Standing Committee paper together with the Questions and Analysis papers. Conduct 2005 reporting analysis to country level where possible.
- Wherever possible information of relevance to species and habitats (e.g. from agri-environment scheme delivery or site protection) should be channelled to the relevant Lead Partners to enable integrated reporting on progress.
- 2005 report, comprising two types of report – a published report and more detailed web report, will be published separately from the two reviews. The report will be concise and make reference to how contributes to the 2010 targets. The discussion about a single versus separate reports should be mentioned to the Standing Committee.

Species and Habitat Review

- The paper to the Standing Committee should be brief and use Figure 1 in the BRIG paper
- All Stages be conducted at a UK level
- Guidance Note to go out by the end of February 2005 if at all possible.

Species and Habitat Review Stage 1

- The candidate list to be given status like using the term "List of UK threatened species and habitats"
- BRIG to coordinate the approval of the candidate list by sending it via BRIG and the Standing Committee to the countries for consideration
- BRIG will publish the approved Candidate list

Species and Habitat Review Stage 2

- Countries that select their own species and habitats must keep these separate from the UK Candidate list
- Scientific input needed at this stage but there will be a need for more policy expertise in the group. The group that deals with Stage 2 may need to be smaller
- The same Candidate list from Stage 1 will emerge from Stage 2 but with priorities attached
- BRIG will comment on the emerging priority lists

Species and Habitat Review Stage 3

- Management of this stage should be similar to Stage 2

- As more country involvement is needed the country groups should be asked what level of involvement they want
- Working groups will be set up to examine how to develop integrated implementation mechanisms
- Although the country derived lists should be kept separate from the UK derived lists in Stage 2, delivery mechanisms that incorporated species from both lists could be considered in Stage 3.

Climate change

- Update ToR and the Recommendations / Tasks
- Scope the work for publishing a guide on climate change

5. Standing items

5.1 Country groups (BRIG0205_8_Country reports)

The Welsh report is appended to these minutes

5.2 BRAG (BRIG0205_9 BRAG)

The degree of detail of this report was questioned.

5.3 NBN

Ant reported that Jim is setting up a new contract with Defra similar to the old Joint Venture Agreements. This contract will deal with the weakness of NBN to work with LBAPs. Jim spoke to Jennifer Davidson (who will talk to Ro Scott) at SNH about identifying a tightly defined area (either geographical or topical) in which to explore how best to get NBN to deliver for LBAPs. The aim is by 2006 to have more targeted work forthcoming.

The Group would welcome continued input from NBN but recognised that Jim was not always able to attend meetings due to their location. It was suggested that if Jim could not attend meetings he be asked to send a representative from NBN.

ACTION 15: JIM TO SPEAK TO RO SCOTT

ACTION 16: ANT TO SPEAK TO JIM

6. Any other business?

6.1 Draft agenda for the next Standing Committee meeting was tabled by Sarah

ACTION 17: SARAH TO ADD BRIG REPORT TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE AGENDA

6.2 Draft programme for the Bristol Partnership meeting in June was tabled by Sarah

6.3 It was noted that the UK Sustainable Development Strategy had been launched. BRIG wanted to know what references there were in this strategy to biodiversity and UK BAP.

ACTION 18: SARAH TO REPORT BACK ON THIS.

7. Next meetings

7.1 The date of the next meeting is Monday 16 May in Edinburgh at 11h30.

Welsh Assembly Government – Report to BRIG 8th February 2005

Wales Biodiversity Partnership (WBP)

The 7th WBP Meeting took place last week on 1st February, and half the meeting was set aside for a presentation and discussion session on development of the Wales Environment Strategy. This Strategy is to include a section on Biodiversity instead of Wales producing a separate BAP, and so the WBP had a brainstorm session to develop the theme for the Strategy document. The Environment Strategy is being developed by a team within the Assembly, including staff seconded from CCW, along with NGO stakeholders such as RSPB and the Forestry Commission. A draft consultation is expected to be out in the summer, and it is hoped that the Minister will have an opportunity to meet all the stakeholders to discuss its contents. WBP will be instrumental in feeding into this process.

Note: Members of the WBP have asked me to pass on to BRIG the advice that they are finding the Report timetable very challenging, and are struggling to keep up with it.

Section 74 Duty to Public Bodies

In line with other changes to legislation that are being explored through the proposed 'New Agency' Bill, our Minister has agreed that the Section 74 duty should also apply to Wales. He is committed to raising the profile of biodiversity issues in Wales, and we hope that this legislation will go through.

(We are not expecting to review our Section 74 List until after the 2005 Reporting Round, when more information will be available.)

BARS

LBAP staff across Wales have been participating in BARS training, and WBP is trying to set aside more funding if needed to complete the training.

Biodiversity Policy in WAG – Nature Conservation Branch

Until last year, the Assembly had an ecologist seconded from CCW into the Nature Conservation branch of Environment Division to deal with biodiversity issues. Now, with increasing policy matters in this area, it has been decided to take a more strategic policy approach, more in line with other business that we deal with on this branch.

A change to the structure of the branch now means that, aside from Trish Fretten, our Head of Branch, we now have 2 people dealing with biodiversity issues – Jill Thomas and myself. We are hopeful that we will now, between us, be able to field the meetings where policy matters are to be discussed, though Jill and I also have responsibility for marine nature conservation policy, a particularly engaging subject at present, as you are aware.

For your information, contact details for the new team as follows:

Trish Fretten: Head of Nature Conservation Branch

E-mail: trish.fretten@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Phone: 029 2082 5985

Jill Thomas: Marine & Biodiversity Policy Officer

E-mail: jill.thomas@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Phone: 029 2082 3172

Wendy Twell: Marine & Biodiversity Policy Officer

E-mail: wendy.twell@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Phone: 029 2082 5250

Wendy Twell

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ACTIONS

ACTION 1: PETE TO GET THE HABITAT DATA FROM WALES AND PREPARE THE FINAL INFORMATION GAP REPORT

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ACTION 16: ANT TO SPEAK TO JIM ABOUT ATTENDANCE

ACTION 17: SARAH TO ADD BRIG REPORT TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE AGENDA

ACTION 18: SARAH TO REPORT BACK ON THE REFERENCE TO BIODIVERSITY AND UK BAP IN THE UK SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Actions carried over from 22 November 2004.

OLD ACTION 3: ROBIN AND THE 2005 SUB-GROUP TO DO SOME TRIALS OF THE 2005 QUESTIONS.

OLD ACTION 5: PETE TO CIRCULATE THE HABITAT INFORMATION GAP REPORT TO BRIG AS SOON AS IT IS COMPLETED

OLD ACTION 14: BRIG MEMBERS TO EMAIL PAUL ITEMS WITHIN THE TOR THAT THEY FEEL BRIG IS NOT COVERING. THESE WILL BE KEPT UNTIL THE 2005 REVIEW IS COMPLETED WHEN THEY WILL BE RECONSIDERED.