

UK Biodiversity Reporting and Information Group
12th Meeting – 16 January 2007
Natural England, Portland House, London
MINUTES

1. Present

Malcolm Vincent (JNCC, Chair); Ant Maddock (JNCC, Secretariat); Hilary Allison (WT); Pete Brotherton (NE); Liz Howe (CCW); Julian Hughes (LINK); Paul Rose (JNCC); Sarah Webster (Defra); Martin Bradley (DOENI); Nicola Hutchinson (LINK).

Video link: Brigid Primrose (SNH); Judith Young (SE); Joanna Drewitt (SE).

Apologies: Richard Weyl (DOENI); Matt Shardlow (LINK); Jim Munford (NBN); Michele Calnan (WAG); Diana Reynolds (WAG).

2. Final acceptance of minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the 11th BRIG meeting were accepted subject to the third line of item 2 being rephrased a "...because of the English Nature involvement in a UK review of Local Record Centres taken by Richard Alexander from English Nature,...".

3. Actions from previous BRIG meeting (see attached)

Pete reported that he had sent out a summary of a study of Local Records Centres done by Just Ecology and exeGesIS. The final report was due in the next month or so. BRIG requested a presentation of this report by Richard Alexander.

ACTION 1: Once the final NE Local Records Centre report is completed, Richard Alexander to be asked to give a presentation of the findings to BRIG

All other actions from the 11th meeting were completed or on the agenda except for the presentation of BARS website by Pete. Due to technical problems, this was postponed to the next meeting.

ACTION 2: Pete to give a demonstration of BARS at the next BRIG meeting

3.1 BRIG's style of working

Comments on BRIG's style of working were invited. In relation to the audience for BRIG's work, it was agreed that a key audience was the Lead Partners.

Generally, it was suggested that the mechanics of how BRIG operated be removed from the style paper and placed in BRIG's Terms of Reference. The style paper should emphasise the sentiment or spirit in which BRIG operates, describing BRIG's dependence on the good will and energy of its members and members of the UK BAP partnership. BRIG, despite not having large funds, levers resources from its membership organisations through its work. In relation to the role of BRIG members, it was agreed that each had a role in helping to lever resources for BRIG's work.

It was agreed that BRIG does not need a high profile but does need to be a well-known authority within the partnership as it provides standards and services required by the partners to undertake their UK BAP work effectively.

ACTION 3: Paul to update the style paper and circulate it to BRIG for comments

3.2 Terms of Reference and Work plan

Terms of Reference

Comments on BRIG's Terms of Reference were invited. Suggestions included the impression that the Terms of Reference underplayed BRIG's role in determining action to be taken by the Partnership in relation to reporting and information providers as well as providing advice to the Standing Committee and undertaking this work on behalf of the Standing Committee.

The authority and extent of leadership of BRIG was discussed. It was agreed that BRIG acted under the overall direction of the Standing Committee but had responsibility for developing standards and delivering action on behalf of the Partnership as a whole and this level of responsibility needed to be better reflected in the Terms of Reference.

ACTION 4: Secretariat to refine the Terms of Reference and circulate to BRIG for comment

Work plan

Comments on BRIG's work plan were invited. Generally, there was broad agreement with the work plan as presented but it needed to be modified so that it was written as a series of tasks each with deadlines for completion and responsibilities for action. In addition, it was necessary for the work plan to be dynamic and to adapt to changing circumstances and needs. Accordingly, the work plan should be reviewed every six months. A number of detailed briefing points were made and these were noted.

ACTION 5: Secretariat to refine the Work plan, including items listed under section 10, and circulate to BRIG for comment

The reporting work of BRIG was discussed and it was agreed that preparation time could be greatly reduced as the 2008 process would mirror that of 2005, and that the new species and habitats would not be included in the 2008 Reporting Round. However, there was a need to link the 2008 Reporting Round to the CBD March 2009 submission timeline (relates to the relevant aspects of CBD reporting requirements and the UK's contribution to the 2010 targets and indicators; see item 3.3). Deadlines for this process were needed.

ACTION 6: Secretariat to write a 2008 Reporting Round scoping report with deadlines by next meeting

ACTION 7: Secretariat to circulate the 2008 Reporting Round scoping report to BRIG and submit to Standing Committee for consideration at their meeting on 25 April 2007

It was agreed that there was a need for some improvement in communications from BRIG to all members of the partnership. It was felt that BRIG could focus on things like developing key messages at a UK level and feed these to the country groups - some countries were developing their own communications strategies.

ACTION 8: Julian to convene a contact group to include country representatives, identify the key areas for BRIG communications and prepare a short communications strategy for consideration at the next BRIG meeting.

3.3 Biodiversity reporting – CBD, 2010 Targets, Indicators and UK BAP

Sarah tabled two papers; the UK indicators and a paper from CBD on national Reporting, to help the discussion on the UK BAP 2008 Reporting Round.

4.1 Targets Review Sub-group

The targets had been approved by ministers. BRIG signed off this work and thanked the Sub-group.

4.2 Species & Habitat Priorities Review Sub-group

It was noted that there needed to be more communication between the Priorities Review Group and BRIG. In addition, there was a need to better communicate the work and thinking of this group to the experts and Lead Partners who were providing the information and their time. It was recognised that the Priorities Review Group had been working to a tight deadline, nonetheless communication was important and the Communication Strategy would need to address this.

There was a discussion about the difference between “Success Criteria” and the “SMART Targets” and how they relate to each other. Standing Committee had agreed that “there needed to be a combination of (a) targets in the form of criteria that represented the point where a species could be removed from the list, and (b) SMART targets which related to the specific actions planned” (Standing Committee meeting minutes 5 April 2006). The former refers to the Success Criteria and to date the Priorities Review Group had not yet discussed how the SMART Targets would link to the Success Criterion.

The linkage between UK BAP & EU Habitats Directive terrestrial and freshwater habitats

A paper from Ed Mountford explaining a relatively good match between Annex 1 habitats and UK BAP habitats was discussed. BRIG felt that there was no need to develop into UK BAP priorities the few Annex 1 habitats not covered by the UK BAP. BRIG thought that this was a useful paper that needed wider circulation including to the HAP groups.

ACTION 9: Malcolm to speak to Ed about promoting these conclusions and whether joint reporting under UK BAP priorities and Annex I habitats could be undertaken so as to avoid duplication

4.3 2005 Reporting Sub-group

The raw data from the 2005 Reporting Round are available on the UK BAP website for users to download and the Reporting Group is advising and helping users (mainly the countries) with the use of these data. In addition, some drill downs from existing graphs to the data comprising those graphs exist on BARS. However, the main web-based report was not complete because the Reporting Group has run out of resources and there are still too many issues that the group need to discuss. An obvious gap is feedback on links between Lead Partners and LBAPs as it is thought that a more personal presentation of an analysis of these data was needed.

BRIG considered that there needs to be a better explanation of this situation to the Partnership and that a type of User Guidelines was needed to make the raw data easier to use and describing links to BARS. This was also seen to be part of a Communications Strategy.

The 2005 Reporting Sub-group was thanked for their work

ACTION 10: Malcolm to consider how best to develop the 2005 reporting action at a UK level

4.4 Climate change Sub-group

Hilary reported that there had been much progress since Standing Committee last saw the report and it is now ready for editing and publication. Hilary asked BRIG to approve the process leading to publication that was outlined in her report to BRIG. BRIG approved the process.

ACTION 11: Hilary to proceed with publication of the Climate Change report

Climate change proofing the UK BAP targets

Work was being coordinated by Andy Stott based on a request from the Chair of the Standing Committee, John Robbs. John felt that we needed to do more to set the targets in the context of the need to avoid wasting resources on conserving species and habitats that will be unsustainable in the long term in the light of predicted climate change. The deadlines for this work were tight (for presentation to Standing Committee in April 2007) and the work was based on a sampling of current UK BAP species and habitats and their targets. It considered direct threats only. The guidance would be generic to help ensure that government spending on biodiversity was appropriate.

ACTION 12: Malcolm to ask Andy if BRIG could see the Climate Proofing report prior to its submission to Standing Committee

4.5 Review timeline update (Figure 1)

It was time to develop a new timeline although this would not be final until the work plan timelines were developed and added

ACTION 13: Ant to produce a new timeline

5.1 Standing Committee actions (numbers refer to items in the minutes)

3.1. Ant was helping with the development of the UK BAP 2010 target indicators.

4.19 and 4.23. Priorities Review Group to present update on Marine and to prepare and circulate detailed paper for discussion at next Standing Committee meeting on 25th April 2007.

ACTION 14: The Priorities Review Group paper to be circulated to BRIG prior to submission to the Standing Committee (comments can be sent to Malcolm up to the day before the Standing Committee meeting)

4.34. Standing Committee requested from JNCC prioritised and costed proposals for closing the information gap at the next meeting of Standing Committee.

ACTION 15: Malcolm to circulate a paper on the results of the proposals for closing the information gap exercise to BRIG prior to the Standing Committee meeting

5.3. The UK BAP Partnership annual conference is to be held at Aviemore, Scotland with the theme of environmental volunteering.

6.3. A final Future UK BAP report is to be presented to the Standing Committee in April 2007. BRIG has limited involvement in this work because it is primarily policy-based for which the Standing Committee rather than BRIG has expertise.

Malcolm Vincent raised the question as to who was responsible for biodiversity in the UK Overseas Territories as John Robbs had emphasised they did not form part of the remit for the Standing Committee. There was a need to define the forum for influencing and supporting biodiversity action in the Overseas Territories if this was not a part of UK BAP.

5.2 BRAG

The BRAG report was accepted.

5.3 Country groups

England

The England report was accepted. Sarah added that on 1 March 2007 a workshop was going to be held to discuss the ecosystem approach as guiding principle for the UK BAP, and how the bureaucracy of the UK BAP could be reduced.

Wales

The Welsh report was accepted.

Scotland and Northern Ireland

Both members said they would send their reports to the secretariat

5.4 NBN

The NBN report was accepted

5.5 BARS

No report was sent because a presentation was planned but failed due to technical difficulties. Pete reported that web services to and from BARS (i.e. links between websites) now enabled users to take data from different websites and incorporate them into analyses on their own computers (see Action 2).

BRIG agreed that the original Species Action Plans and the original Habitat Action Plans that are currently on the UK BAP website under "Plans" would be archived in the UK BAP website library. The latest plans including new targets and current status would be stored in BARS with links to the UK BAP website. Users will be able to get to the current plans direct from the UK BAP website.

6 Any other business?

BRIG wants to contribute to the 2007 UK BAP Partnership Conference. Ideas should be sent to the conference steering group in time for their next meeting on 6 February 2007.

ACTION 16: JNCC to provide background information with some ideas of how BRIG could contribute to the 2007 UK BAP Partnership Conference to BRIG before 6 February

7 Next meeting

Monday 2 April 2007, Bristol

(Next Standing Committee meeting is on 25 April 2007)

UK Biodiversity Reporting and Information Group

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