

UK Biodiversity Reporting and Information Group
3rd Meeting – Cardiff, 27 January 2004
MINUTES

Present

Deryck Steer
John Robbins
Sarah Webster
Joanna Drewitt

Trish Fretten
Jim Munford
Pete Brotherton
Hilary Allison

Julian Hughes
Robin Wynde
Ant Maddock
Stephen Grady

Apologies

Paul Rose
Mike Meharg

Sarah Ruff
John Ramsay

Judith Young
John Baxter

Resignations

Gwyn Williams

1. Welcome

Changes to the membership of BRIG were outlined. Julian Hughes replaces Gwyn who has resigned from BRIG due to changes in his position with RSPB. Deryck had written a letter to Gwyn thanking him for his contribution to BRIG. Sarah Webster will now represent DEFRA in the place of Hilary Neal who has been promoted in DEFRA. Sarah Ruff is on maternity leave and Hilary Allison will stand in for her. As Robin was a sub-group Chair Deryck formally invited him to full membership of BRIG. Trish welcomed everyone to the Welsh Assembly.

2. Final acceptance of minutes of last meeting

The minutes from the 2nd BRIG meeting were accepted and are available on the UKBAP website at: http://www.ukbap.org.uk/Library/BRIG/Minutes_Agenda/27_10_03_Minutes.pdf

3. Actions from previous BRIG meeting (see attached)

Ant provided a review of the status of the actions from the 2nd BRIG meeting. Of note:

ACTION 1: CARRIED OVER, DERYCK TO MEET WITH BRIAN HARDING (STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIR) BEFORE THE NEXT STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING (22ND MARCH).

ACTION 2: BRIG SECRETARIAT TO COMPILE A LIST OF PRODUCTS BASED ON THE WORK DONE BY THE SUBGROUPS AND SUBMIT TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR THEIR 22 MARCH MEETING.

ACTION 3: ANT TO SUBMIT THE BRIG PROGRAMME OF WORK TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR THEIR MARCH MEETING BY CONTACTING THE SUB-GROUP CHAIRS.

4. Feedback from working groups and other work since last meeting

4.1 Process to be followed during BRIG meetings. See item 8.

4.2 Dealing with the 2002 Information Gap. Paper BRIG0104 1 Info Gap.

Since there was concern that there were gaps in the 2002 reporting round information, BRIG was asked to look at these and to make proposals for filling these gaps. Ant provided brief background to the informal group's Information Gap paper.

Ant asked the BRIG members what they thought of the process and was it worth pursuing; if yes, once the species/habitats had been selected what action was required to fill the information gaps. Deryck noted that the main driver of this is to take action by initially concentrating on areas where we know there will be serious consequences unless we act now.

Pete then introduced his analysis of the England data by the England Biodiversity Group. This approach is similar based on the availability of baseline and monitoring data.

After a detailed discussion the following actions were agreed:

ACTION 4: A SUB GROUP COMPRISING JIM, PETE, ROBIN AND ANT MEET AND DEVELOP THE PROCESS PRESENTED IN THE TWO PAPERS.

This sub group met immediately after the BRIG meeting and agreed to test the analysis using questions 1, 3 and 5 outlined in Table 1 of the paper submitted to BRIG. Pete, Robin and Ant were to do this on Friday 30 January 2004.

ACTION 5: USE THIS PROCESS TO IDENTIFY GAPS IN INFORMATION AND IDENTIFY A LIST OF SPECIES AND HABITATS FOR ATTENTION.

ACTION 6: SUBMIT A PROGRESS REPORT TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE OUTLINING THIS WORK AND INDICATING WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE FOR COMMENT FROM BRIG MEMBERS.

ACTION 7: SUBMIT FINAL PROCESS AND LIST TO JNCC BY 10 MARCH. JNCC TO SEND THIS REPORT TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE BY 15 MARCH.

4.3 2005 Reporting Group. Paper BRIG0104 2 2005 reporting.

The 2005 Reporting Group had agreed on a broad approach and formulated a timetable to deliver the 2005 reporting round in accordance with the meeting dates of BRIG and the Standing Committee. The intention in the 2005 reporting round is to include as much information as possible using BARS which, by then, will be fully up and running.

Joanna asked if there was sufficient flexibility in BARS to answer questions. Robin replied that options boxes will be as appropriate and useful as possible and a free text comments box may be added to allow reporters to further explain their answers.

Joanna asked if there would be links to other reporting systems, such as agri-environment schemes. Robin agreed that appropriate information that will not be captured in this reporting system should be considered.

Pete said that there will be staggered reporting with LBAPs reporting ahead of Lead Partners so that Lead Partners could include the LBAP responses in their reports.

Deryck asked for the risks to this project to be assessed. For example, BARS has to work, needs to be owned by someone who will continue to support it throughout the process. The BARS steering group will consider the issues of governance and control to ensure that they are being managed.

John highlighted that the subgroup needs to plan sufficient time for appropriate analysis of the data as this was not done in 2002.

ACTION 8: ENSURE THAT THE RISKS TO THE 2005 REPORTING ARE IDENTIFIED EARLY AND BROUGHT TO THE NEXT BRIG MEETING.

ACTION 9: ENSURE THAT THE SUPPORT MECHANISM FOR BARS WAS CLEARLY OUTLINED IN THE 2005 PLANNING.

ACTION 10: THE 2005 REVIEW WORKING GROUP TO DEVELOP DRAFT QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION AT THE NEXT BRIG MEETING.

ACTION 11: THE 2005 REPORTING SUB GROUP NEEDS TO MAKE CLEAR WHAT WILL BE REPORTED IN 2005 (TARGETS, SPECIES AND HABITATS REVIEW, 2005 UK BAP STATUS).

4.4 Species and Habitat Review Group.

Joanna gave a short presentation of the planning work she had been doing with Paul.

It was deemed critical that the sub-group ensures credibility in what it does and recommends. A four stringed approach for the sub-group was outlined to help achieve this. Joanna asked BRIG members what they thought of this approach, and if the group accepted it, this would be presented in a paper to the Standing Committee in March.

- science and criteria will be the main work of the sub group
- practical delivery mechanisms
- it must build on the good start develop by BIG by using all relevant data sources and engaging with all relevant organisations
- encourage wide ownership

Joanna reported that the Standing Committee felt that this was an all or nothing approach but wanted to reassure them and BRIG that this is not the case. This is in fact seen as an iterative process that is transparent and that can be repeated to ensure the correct approach and selections are made. It is felt that the deadline for delivery is too tight (within the next year) and it would be better to assign a time frame for each of the items in the four stringed approach.

She proposed that for the next Standing Committee the sub group provides working examples to demonstrate the planned process. The Standing Committee will then have a clearer idea of the process to be able to determine if this is a viable approach. The Partnership meeting in spring may be a good opportunity to determine the issues related to ownership of this process, where feedback could also be obtained. It will take some time to finalise the selections so there could be a contingency to include emergency action if there are species or habitats requiring immediate action.

Deryck was pleased that the sub group was considering the sensitivities of the Standing Committee. The key is to ensure that the considerations are based on a sound foundation. It is also important to highlight to the Standing Committee the gains that will be achieved in taking this more lengthy but considered approach.

It was agreed that if new action plans were required then the Species and Habitat Priorities Review Sub Group would refer back to BRIG for guidance on the ownership issues such as deciding who will be responsible for delivering the targets for the new species or habitats.

Julian requested that the sub-group meet soon so that the ideas given by Paul and Joanna could be fully shared, discussed and agreed by the sub group. Deryck offered to join this next meeting prior to the Standing Committee in March.

ACTION 12: SPECIES AND HABITAT REVIEW SUB GROUP TO PREPARE A PRESENTATION TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE USING A SPECIES AND A HABITAT TO ILLUSTRATE THE PROCESS TO BE USED IN THE REVIEW.

4.5 Targets Review Group. BRIG0104 3 Targets.

Pete gave a short presentation of the work done by this group and noted that the targets review group would meet on 10 February 2004 in London.

ACTION 13: THE TARGETS REVIEW GROUP TO NOTE RISKS TO THIS PROJECT AND BRING THESE TO THE NEXT BRIG MEETING.

5. Standing items

5.1 Country groups

Wales – Trish.

- The Wales Biodiversity Group meeting on 3 February will discuss skills training focussing mainly on taxonomy. In the afternoon a business meeting will be held.
- The Wales Biodiversity Group has asked CCW to hold a landscape scale restoration seminar which is to be held on 13 February.

Scotland – Joanna.

- The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy will be launched at the end of May.

England – Sarah.

- England Biodiversity Group minutes were circulated to BRIG members before the meeting.
- Sarah reminded everyone of the two-day Exchange Fair to be held at Sheffield. This fair would have stalls and will focus on networking and information exchange among local and national groups.
- The English Biodiversity Strategy Indicators was published on 1 December 2003 and has eight headline and several sectoral indicators.

5.2 BRAG. The BRAG report back paper was circulated to BRIG members prior to the meeting.

5.3 UK Biodiversity Indicators Forum. Report on meeting with John Custance.

Deryck met John and agreed that John would continue as chair of the Forum and would work closely with BRIG. It was good for the Forum and BRIG to maintain contact but the Forum would not be accountable to BRIG as it had a broader role. A potential role for BRIG is to interpret the indicators derived by the Forum.

Paul is on the Forum and would provide the link between the groups. A meeting of the Forum is planned soon.

ACTION 14: DERYCK TO ENSURE THAT JOHN CUSTANCE CALLS A MEETING OF THE BIODIVERSITY INDICATORS FORUM IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS.

5.4 NBN

- Jim reported that a business priorities meeting was being held in April where implementation plans would be reviewed and gaps and common themes sought.
- In May 2004 the new version of NBN Gateway will be launched. This represents a significant advance over the current Gateway with added content, open access *etc.*
- NBN acted as the UK node for GBIF.
- Work on the species dictionary was updated making it more usable including providing help with legislation.
- NBN had received a Joint Venture Agreement worth £15 000 from DEFRA to fund a two day seminar in which the value of NBN for LBAPs was to be discussed. The seminar would be held on 31 March to 1 April 2004. Charlotte Gault is the organiser.
- NBN is addressing a number of headline projects. For example, Freshwater working with the Water Framework Directive and a Woodland project if support from the Forestry Commission is received.
- BIOCASE meeting looking at museum collections of metadata. These are keen to use NBN metadata.

ACTION 15: SECRETARIAT TO GET THE DETAILS OF THE LBAP / NBN SEMINAR FROM CHARLOTTE GAULT AND CIRCULATE THESE TO BRIG MEMBERS AND JNCC STAFF.

6. New items

6.1 Partnership Meeting 2004, Cardiff.

Trish reported that the theme of the meeting was to interact with people implementing the UK BAP. It was emphasised that it was vital that there was exchange of information from the people implementing biodiversity to the senior partnership members. There was a perception that this opportunity had been missed at the Perth meeting last year.

6.2 Membership – This was discussed in the welcome to the meeting and is reported under item 1.

ACTION 16: MEMBERSHIP FROM SCOTTISH NATURAL HERITAGE TO BE CLARIFIED BY SECRETARIAT

ACTION 17: SECRETARIAT TO SEND OUT TO MEMBERS AND UPDATED LIST OF BRIG AND SUB GROUP MEMBERSHIP.

6.3 Climate change meeting.

Ant reported that he, Hilary and Julian had attended a climate change meeting in Bristol the previous day. This meeting was keen to get their data on climate change involved in the targets and the species and habitats reviews.

ACTION 18: ANT TO DISTRIBUTE THE PAPERS ARISING FROM THIS MEETING TO ALL BRIG AND RELEVANT SUBGROUP MEMBERS.

ACTION 19: JOANNA TO PROVIDE THE WEB LINK TO THE JUST ECOLOGY REPORT ON CLIMATE CHANGE DATA. ([Review of UK & Scottish Surveillance and Monitoring Schemes for the Detection of Climate-induced Changes in Biodiversity](#) – Just Ecology, 2003)

7. Next BRIG meeting

7.1 The next BRIG meeting will be held at DEFRA, in Bristol, Tuesday 7 September 2004 at 11h15.

8. Process review of meeting

Deryck highlighted his role as Chair was to be responsible for the work of BRIG and report this to the Standing Committee. To facilitate this, the process he would like to follow at BRIG meetings would be to introduce the meeting with issues like:

- Scene setting
- Update the political climate and available resources

The core business of the sub group work should follow. Sub group work reports should:

- Update on progress and cover issues like is the group on schedule, up to expected quality and have they got the necessary resources. This to be a short review as it is important that BRIG does not get into the detail and do the work of the sub groups.
- Issues for BRIG. Then, any problems that cannot be solved by the sub groups need to be raised. This is where BRIG will get involved in the sub group's work. The objective here is to help solve problems and to ensure a consistent approach in problem solving.
- This reporting approach ensures that the detailed technical work and discussion is reserved for the specialists within the sub groups.

Thereafter the standing items and any other business are discussed. It was suggested that standing items are presented as papers distributed prior to the BRIG meetings, so that only the key points need be summarised at BRIG meetings thereby making better use of time.

Deryck said he would like to continue to review the meeting process at the end of each meeting. This is an opportunity for anyone to comment on what has worked well / needs improving. The comments given at the end of the last meeting had been incorporated into the present agenda.

It was recommended that the meeting proceed quicker over the general items 1 to 3. In addition, presenting the standing items as papers prior to the meeting would help provide more time for core business of BRIG.

ACTION 20: STANDING ITEMS (COUNTRY GROUPS, BRAG, UK INDICATORS FORUM, and NBN) ARE PRESENTED AS PAPERS DISTRIBUTED PRIOR TO THE BRIG MEETINGS.

ACTION 21: DERYCK TO PROVIDE A STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTING PROFORMA FOR THE SUBGROUPS.

NOTE: PREPARATION OF PAPERS FROM SUBGROUPS TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE MUST BE SUBMITTED TO JNCC BY 10 MARCH 2004. JNCC TO SUBMIT FINAL PAPERS TO DEFRA BY 15 MARCH 2004 FOR CIRCULATION TO STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBERS.