

UK Biodiversity Partnership Standing
Committee Meeting

Wednesday 5th April 2006

Future Direction of UK Biodiversity

Paper UKBPSC 06-03

UK BIODIVERSITY STANDING COMMITTEE

SCOPING PAPER ON FUTURE DIRECTION FOR UK BIODIVERSITY

Introduction

1. At its September 2005 meeting, the UK Standing Committee discussed a paper UKBPSC05-12, that had originally been written for the Joint Nature Conservation Committee on the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and Country Biodiversity Strategies. The Committee requested a scoping paper on the way forward for UK Biodiversity work beyond the current UK BAP reviews. This is timely, as the 8th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Brazil in March 2006 considered [and approved?] a resolution from the CBD Working Group on Review of Implementation (WGG-RI) to review the implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans. <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meeting.aspx?mtg=COP-08>.

UK Commitments and devolution

2. The UK is one of 188 Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity which was adopted at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 and entered into force in 1993. This Convention has three main objectives: the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of biodiversity and the sharing of benefits from the use of genetic resources. The Convention requires all parties to develop national strategies and action plans for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and sets out requirements relating to in situ conservation ranging from the establishment of a system of protected areas to the preservation of traditional knowledge.
3. At the Gothenburg Summit in 2001 the EU committed itself to the objective of halting the rate of biodiversity loss with the aim of achieving this by 2010. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, Heads of Government committed themselves to achieving a significant reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010. These, and other, multilateral environmental agreements, cover the UK's action to conserve biodiversity both globally and within the UK. The UK's engagement on international biodiversity issues is managed through an Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group on Biodiversity (IDMGB), established in 2004, and is outside the scope of this paper, which focuses on biodiversity within the UK.
4. A decision needs to be taken about whether, and if so, how, the UK's Overseas Territories (OTs) and Crown Dependencies (CDs) are included in this work. These harbour much of our rarest and most threatened biodiversity, and yet the governments concerned (where governments as such actually exist) have limited capacity and resources to address conservation or monitoring actions to anything like the extent that we do here in the UK mainland. Annex 1 sets out

the position and current work on the Overseas Territories. In terms of reporting both of UK activities in general, and towards 2010 in particular, this leaves us in rather a weak position. The OTs were included in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, and are included in our implementation reports to the CBD, yet our reporting towards 2010 doesn't integrate OT biodiversity, even though there may be more biodiversity in the OTs, and they may be closer to meeting the 2010 target, than at home. As part of UK plc, they are also part of JNCC's remit, but not a part that is given any prominence by the country agencies. Biodiversity work in the UK's OTs is largely funded through the OTs Environment Programme funded by DfID and FCO; they are also eligible for Darwin funding. There are no corresponding UK funding mechanisms for the Crown Dependencies. A recent article in a newsletter from the UK overseas territories Conservation forum http://www.ukotcf.org/pdf/F_News27.pdf. Criticises UK spend (or the lack of it) on OT biodiversity relative to spend in the metropolitan UK. One way forward might be to refer the matter to the IDMGB and seek their steer on where OTs should be considered; the WSSD delivery plan on international biodiversity, for which IDMGB has responsibilities has actions (at objective 7.1) for the OTs.

5. Collectively, as the UK, we have obligations to deliver our international commitments. We also have UK reporting obligations in EU and international agreements. However, following devolution from 1998 onwards, the implementation of biodiversity conservation is entirely devolved; we therefore need to identify both where we need to act collectively to meet UK commitments and where it is desirable to act collectively to create a whole that is greater than the sum of the parts. To do so we need to begin by looking at some of the drivers:

“Contexting” drivers

6. Significant changes in the policy landscape have occurred since the UK Biodiversity Action Plan was published; perhaps the most significant of these has been devolution from 1998 onwards and the subsequent emergence of country strategies for biodiversity and environment in each of the four countries of the UK. These strategies are increasingly being underpinned by biodiversity duties in domestic legislation. One area where the devolved countries have spoken collectively is on Sustainable Development; in March 2005, Government launched *Securing the future – delivering the UK sustainable development strategy*. This set out a new purpose and principles for sustainable development and new shared priorities agreed across the UK. In conjunction with the strategy, a new UK strategic framework for sustainable development, covering the period up to 2020 was agreed to provide a consistent approach and focus across the UK. The top-down drivers have also changed, notably with the EU Gothenburg agreement in 2001 to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010 and the related WSSD target in 2002. The list below is

intended to capture the most important drivers but is by no means exhaustive:

Convention on Biological Diversity 1992
Halting Biodiversity loss by 2010 -Gothenburg, Johannesburg targets
EU Biodiversity Strategy 1998 and Message from Malahide
EU Birds and Habitats Directives
EU Communication promoting coherence between biodiversity strategies
Emerging EU Strategies under the 6th Environmental Action Programme¹
Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)
(Bonn) Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and its daughter
agreements (such as Ascobans, and Eurobats)
OSPAR – The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of
the North-East Atlantic
UK sustainable development framework published earlier this year
Biodiversity duties in domestic legislation (S1 of Nature Conservation
(Scotland) Act 2004, Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill in
England and Wales and Wildlife (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order)
Marine Legislation
Country Biodiversity Strategies
Millennium Ecosystem Assessment
Strong area of public interest and concern – powerful interest groups with
big memberships.

7. With these drivers in mind, this scoping paper begins by examining questions that we need to tackle in the immediate term, and then where we might go in the slightly longer term.

UK Biodiversity Action Plan

8. The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) was published in 1994 as part of the UK response to the Convention on Biological Diversity signed at Rio in 1992. The UK BAP helps coordinate and drive conservation work at national and local levels through identifying priorities for action and setting biological targets for the recovery of species and habitats. Under the plan there are 436 costed and targeted national action plans for our most threatened habitats and species in the UK, and these are supported by approximately 150 Local biodiversity action plans, often at County level.
9. The UK Biodiversity Action Plan went much wider than species and habitats, setting out a series of activities for the 20 year period starting in 1994 covering things like internationally protected areas, CAP reform, public awareness, and global biodiversity.
10. In practice, however, the focus has been very much on the species and habitat action plans. There are now three UK review processes

¹ Air Quality, Marine, Soil, Natural Resources, Waste, Pesticides, Urban Environment, Environment and Health.

under way, coordinated by the UK Standing Committee, and Biodiversity Reporting and Information Group: the 2005 reporting round; review of targets; and review of priority species and habitats.

2005 Reporting Round

11. The 2005 reports are in the process of being collated, and a report will be published in 2006. This will provide important information, which will be presented at both UK and Country level - not only on how individual species and habitats are faring, but also about the emerging influences by sector and constraints to delivery. It will be important that we think individually within our country groups, about how we interpret the messages from the reporting round, and the audiences that we bring them to, as well as how we use them to shape the policy priorities within our country strategies. Emerging results suggest that targeted conservation effort is stabilising declines in some priority species/habitats, with 66% of species increasing, stable or decline slowing, but at the same time there have been worrying declines in more generalist species such as butterflies, moths, woodland birds, the causes of which are not always known. This illustrates the need to conserve healthy ecosystems – to stop the common species becoming rare.

Targets review

12. The targets review aims to ensure that the BAP remains relevant by updating targets that have expired or need changing in the light of recent information, and particularly in the light of the 2010 target to halt biodiversity loss. For the first time, the targets will be allocated to the four countries. We are jointly supporting a costings study that is developing a robust and flexible framework to enable us to provide estimates of the cost of the new targets. Thus far, the work indicates a significant shortfall, in the region of £117m pa for habitats and £322m pa for species, between the costs of delivering the BAPs and the funding available. It is expected that this gap will remain significant after the figures have been updated to reflect the updated targets that will be the subject of the country group consultations. It is anticipated that each country will want to go to Ministers about its allocation of the new targets, together with the costings information which will also be disaggregated to country. Side by side with the costs, we need to articulate the benefits of the work undertaken under the UK BAP, including the ecosystem services which biodiversity provides.

Priority lists review

13. The principal aim of the list review is to ensure that the UK BAP remains dynamic and responsive to both new information and conservation needs. The first stage of this is a scientific assessment of conservation status and this will result in a provisional list of threatened species and habitats. All the signs are that this list will be a lot longer than the current list of 461 with perhaps as many as 1000 or 1200

species - partly because there have been continuing declines in common species and partly because we have better data and better tools and more time to complete this exercise than we had in 1994.

What we should do with the list

14. We will need to think, both collectively as the UK, and as individual countries, about how we use the new list. It is unrealistic, however, to expect a list that is 1,000, or 1200 species long to be used in the same way as a list of 461. We will need to consider how we use it to inform the statutory lists under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act, and in England and Wales, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, and so on. The list will be important:

- as an information source for public bodies to refer to in fulfilling their duty to further the conservation of biodiversity under the CROW Act 2000 and subsequently the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill;
- for targeting resources, schemes and policies to where they are most urgently needed, mainly through feeding into the policy priorities of the country biodiversity strategies;
- as a starting point for statutory lists under the CROW Act, Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act, NERC Bill, and the forthcoming Wildlife (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order which will place a duty on the Department to produce, publish and maintain a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving Biodiversity in NI.

15. Practical considerations, not least devolution, mean that it is not sensible to set up UK wide action plans for all the species and habitats on the list. Our target ought to be – and has to be, if we are to take the 2010 target seriously, to slow, halt and ultimately reverse the declines that have led to species being on the list. The question is, what is the best way of doing this? There is a danger that, if we focus all our efforts on conserving a certain list of priorities, this will merely result in a different set of priorities topping the list in 10 years time – a kind of “revolving door” of biodiversity which we must avoid. Further, If it is true that we do not understand the causes of the declines in certain groups, then the converse is also true: we cannot be sure whether a particular intervention will lead to their recovery. The fact that certain groups of butterflies have declined even on land under agri-environment schemes, at the same time as declines in farmland birds are flattening out, suggests that we should be cautious about using one group as a proxy for others; it also suggests we should be cautious about setting large numbers of specific, low level targets for species, as this may be tantamount to treating symptoms not causes. Rather, should be aiming to deliver healthy, resilient ecosystems that

are needed to stop the common species becoming rare. We should be aiming for fewer, higher level targets.

16. Given that all the implementation levers are now devolved, we need to think in terms of delivering the UK BAP through our individual country strategies. Can we integrate groups of species into habitat plans and policy programmes, to achieve the delivery of species, habitat and wider ecosystem targets? Could we perhaps do this by analysing the new list to draw out the generic issues threats/problems/ for each species, at the UK level and then work up action plans for the issues, which could be aligned with our country strategies?.
17. There could be several ways of approaching this; RSPB have recently explored an approach using birds on the provisional list as an example, and this provides useful pointers for a way forward. This suggests that for each species on the list we could identify whether the main priority was for monitoring or research, whether current management needed to be sustained or whether action was needed to promote recovery. For those where action was needed, we could look at the kinds of action required and how these might be grouped, with the presumption that this would be linked to the nature of the threat, such as climate change, diffuse water pollution and so on. To sum up, for each species we would attach a series of “signposts” – whether they needed research, monitoring or action as a first cut and where action was needed, the kind of action and whether this was generic, habitat-based or for a group of species. An advantage of this approach is its utility for our policy-influencing work, as it enables us to say that x species would be assisted by adaptation to climate change, y species by sustainable peat use, and so on. This would help us to prioritise particular policy strands. A similar approach has been applied successfully to SSSIs in England where a list of reasons for unfavourable condition has been linked to a list of generic “remedies” – see list at Annex 2.
18. There would, of course, be a residual number of species which, in addition to any of the generic issues, required individual consideration. But this approach would do away with the need for each plan to be comprehensive, and to re-address familiar issues. Ultimately, the vision needs to be of fewer, more integrated, better plans, linked into policy sectors, with a presumption of using the country strategies structure to deliver habitat, species and ecosystem priorities.
19. To maximise the clarity of purpose of the list for those using it, it would make most sense to publish the list once at least the initial signposting had been done. Following Standing Committee approval, it is anticipated that the list will be submitted to Ministers of all four UK administrations prior to publication on the UK BAP web-site.

Marine biodiversity

20. As ever it is slightly different in the marine area where nature conservation policy is devolved inshore (within 12 nautical miles of the coast), but reserved offshore (outside 12 nautical miles), apart from Fisheries, which are devolved up to 200 miles off the coast in Scotland.
21. In December 2005, the UK Government and devolved administrations published "Safeguarding Sea Life: the joint UK response to the Review of Marine Nature Conservation- www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/ewd/rmnc/index.htm. This sets out our agreed policies on marine biodiversity but makes clear that each administration may implement them differently in their areas.
22. There is a general, if tacit, agreement that the approach of action plans for single species and habitats works less well for the marine environment.
23. Firstly, with the exception of some very localised habitats and species, targets based on extent and distribution are difficult or impossible to quantify, as these measures are relatively unknown for most marine habitats. Secondly, even where there are measures of extent and distribution, these variables cannot feasibly be measured on a 3-yearly basis. Broad-scale habitat mapping is occurring in UK waters, using geophysical data linked to sample-based biological information where available to classify and map our seas. However, existing data-sets are incomplete and there are substantial gaps in our knowledge of habitats. Difficulties arise where habitats are ephemeral; Sabellaria reefs are a good example of the dynamic nature of our dynamic marine systems.
24. The maritime environment is much better considered and managed as an ecosystem, moving away from the traditional rare/threatened habitats approach, although an individual approach may be required for some marine species such as cetaceans. This would then suggest the use of indicators, which may be chemical, biological or physical, to measure the health of the whole ecosystem. We do not yet have the information to know what those targets should be, but this is in train as part of the work supporting the Government's Marine Bill.
25. In the meantime, a common, robust, scientifically credible list of priorities for marine species and habitats that draws together all the scientific information, would seem an important resource that could be used by the statutory conservation agencies to advise Government on all their policies in the marine area - and could be used differently in the different countries. A collaboratively funded project is underway to deliver this.

Setting the UK BAP Reviews in a new context

26. Looking beyond the UK BAP reviews, and in the light of the recommendations being discussed at the 8th Conference of the Parties to CBD, this paper moves on to consider how the UK Role might develop in the future. Where does it make sense to create a whole that is greater than the sum of the parts?

Future requirements under CBD

27. We will need to consider carefully the implications of resolutions arising from CBD COP8, but in general there is a case for aligning UK work more closely with CBD requirements. The Convention has a wide ranging agenda with seven thematic work programmes on:

- (a) Agricultural biodiversity;
- (b) Dry and sub-humid lands biodiversity;
- (c) Forest biodiversity;
- (d) Inland waters biodiversity;
- (e) Marine and coastal biodiversity
- (f) Mountain biodiversity
- (g) Island biodiversity (under development)

And 17 cross – cutting work programmes/initiatives:

Access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing	Impact assessments
Invasive alien species	Indicators
Biological diversity and tourism	Liability and redress – Article 14(2)
Climate change and biological diversity	Protected areas
Economics, trade and incentive measures	Public education and awareness
Ecosystem approach	Sustainable use of biodiversity
Global Strategy for Plant Conservation	Technology transfer and cooperation
2010 biodiversity target	Traditional knowledge, innovations and practices
Global Taxonomy Initiative	

These themes bring in a range of issues beyond the traditional conservation agenda. We highlight the following specific areas:

(1) Ecosystem approach

28. As a Party to the CBD the UK is committed to meeting Decisions made at the CBD's Conference of Parties. This includes the implementation of the ecosystem approach² through national policies and where practical assistance to other countries. However, there is an

² CBD definition: The ecosystem approach is a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way.

insufficiently widely-shared understanding of what this means, and it is even more doubtful whether we are doing sufficient to put the approach into practice; the thinking on marine biodiversity conservation may be ahead in this respect.

29. An ecosystem approach is already being applied to managing the natural environment, notably under the Water Framework Directive and in the context of the marine environment. We need to extend this approach further to design and implement an ecosystem-based approach to conserving, managing and enhancing the natural environment in general. This implies a significant shift of emphasis in policy making, away from a 'silo-based' approach focused on single environmental issues, in favour of a more holistic approach, with policies focused on the need to manage whole ecosystems. This would argue in favour of taking forward such work within country strategies, but with joined-up thinking across the UK. Large scale restoration of habitats is likely to be needed, particularly in the light of climate change, and is arguably the agenda on which we should now be focussing with greatest clarity.

(2) Global Plant Conservation Strategy and Global Taxonomy Initiative

30. Further requirements under CBD include the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, to which the UK response was launched at CBD COP 7 and the Global Taxonomy Initiative, for which the Natural History Museum has recently completed a UK Needs Assessment. Neither of these initiatives have received particular attention from the UK Standing Committee, partly because of the priority we have been giving to completion of the reviews under BRIG – but arguably we should be giving these commitments greater prominence in our UK discussions.

(3) CBD Reporting requirements

31. We recently submitted a third UK National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity. However, this was not focussed on UK BAP targets, or priority species and habitats, but covered migratory species, ex-situ conservation, and sustainable use. CBD commitments also cover genetic diversity, including that of domesticated animals, cultivated plants, and fish, which have received little attention within UK biodiversity plans. The reporting requirements are evolving, and are likely to become much more indicator-based. Work is therefore currently underway to develop a set of indicators for the 2010 target and beyond

UK indicators for the 2010 target and beyond

32. The seventh Conference of the Parties to the CBD last year in Kuala Lumpur decided that to assess global progress towards the 2010

target, and to communicate trends, a small number of indicators would be developed. Parties to the Convention were invited to use or establish national indicators to assess progress towards the targets. They also agreed a framework of seven focal areas covering the different objectives of the Convention and 21 related indicators.

33. In Europe, following the major stakeholder conference in Malahide in 2004, the Environment Council³ decided to develop a set of headline biodiversity indicators to assess the 2010 target, using the CBD indicator framework⁴, with some small modifications. Subsequently, a project known as Streamlining European Biodiversity Indicators 2010 (SEBI2010) has been established to implement this.
34. We can expect there to be requirements for UK national-level reporting to be aligned with these international frameworks. The UK is participating actively in these international work programmes to ensure close alignment; the overall objective is to reduce the burden of international reporting whilst making it more effective.
35. In September 2005 the UK Standing Committee recently endorsed proposals to develop a small “basket” of headline indicators at UK level to enable reporting on progress towards the 2010 target. These will be focussed on biodiversity outcomes but may include some indicators of process – such as policy change. They will use existing data sources and avoid creating new burdens on the four administrations, while lining up with EU & CBD frameworks as far as possible, with the further aim that the indicators should be enduring providing a good communication vehicle for biodiversity beyond 2010.
36. The small, UK –wide working group who are taking this forward have recommended a basket of 18 indicators, 12 ready to go and 6 needing further development. Most of these are data-series that are already being collected across the UK, but with some adjustments needed to ensure consistency and some areas for further development.

Millennium Ecosystem Assessment

37. The recently published Millennium Ecosystem Assessment identified the main direct and indirect causes of biodiversity loss:

- i. habitat loss in the terrestrial environment;
- ii. over-exploitation (by fisheries) in the marine environment;
- iii. invasive species in island environments; and
- iv. a combination of pollution (nutrient enrichment), habitat loss and invasive species in the freshwater environment.

³ 10997/04 28th June 2004

⁴ CBD Focal Area ‘Status of traditional knowledge, innovations and practices’ was not adopted by EU. EU added a new Focal Area on ‘Public opinion’. Titles of EU Focal Areas were abbreviated.

Many of the direct causes are familiar: habitat loss and over-exploitation of species, for example. However, all these causes are expected to be superseded by climate change as the dominant global driver of biodiversity loss by the end of the century.

38. The assessment also focused attention on the indirect drivers which are the root cause of those factors that cause direct loss of biodiversity but which are often given less attention in policy responses, and emphasised the need to explore and identify the contribution of biodiversity to other sectors, particularly through ecosystem services.

Delivering international obligations cost-effectively

39. More generally on international obligations, we need to develop strategies for the delivery of international obligations cost-effectively by improving the integration and cross-fertilisation between UK BAP and other conservation initiatives - both UK and international. For example, developments and changes to the CAP may help deliver the priorities species and habitats. Both agri-environment and Water Framework Directive have benefited UK conservation greatly over the years and there may be lessons from these policies that are transferable to UK BAP.
40. In particular, there could be better integration of work on the UK BAP with that on the Habitats Directive; work is currently under way on the Habitats Directive and separately on Priority Habitats under UK BAP - the habitats are defined differently in the two initiatives and consequently refer to different spatial units. Essentially we are doing the same work twice - so it may be worth considering how conservation would benefit, money and time saving perhaps, if the same definitions were used for both.

Information provision

41. Strongly linked to the above are our needs for information provision – survey, monitoring, biological data. There are still significant gaps in information on UK baselines and trends for UK BAP species and particularly for habitats. If these remain unaddressed, we will have difficulty reporting progress against the 2010 target. Urgent consideration needs to be given as to how these can be filled in an efficient and cost effective manner.
42. There are clearly areas where it makes sense to collect data on a common basis. Countryside Survey, the series of periodic, national surveys of our vegetation, soils and features, and which is about to begin for the fifth time in the form of Countryside Survey 2007, is an obvious example.

Research Agenda to meet UK Policy needs

43. Specifying the research agenda to meet policy needs is always challenging, because of the need to hit a moving target and because policy makers and researchers seem to speak different languages. Getting a consensus about the research agenda to meet policy needs is even more of a challenge, because everyone has got their own hobby horses. But BRAG, the Biodiversity Research Advisory group, has played a valuable role in pulling together short, agreed, statements of research needs that we can feed into NERC reviews and so on and we should support them.

National Biodiversity Network

44. Great progress is being made with the National Biodiversity Network and this resource has huge potential to form the basis of independent biological assessments, UK BAP trends, and the provision of advice. However, there remain some big gaps in NBN coverage of certain groups of UK BAP species. Information on gaps from the 2005 reporting round should be used to target datasets that may help fill some information gaps

Climate change

45. Climate change impacts pose an increasing challenge to meeting our objectives and commitments on biodiversity over the next 10 to 20 years. Whatever we do to limit emissions, we can expect to see the northward, and 'up mountain', movement of climatic niches – a particular problem for species that already make their homes in northern and mountainous areas, and have nowhere to go; disruption of the seasonal movements of some migratory species; rising sea levels, changing sea temperatures and increasing acidity.

46. Climate change not only adds yet another pressure to those already threatening biodiversity, but it also interacts with pressures for example from land-use change and non-native species.

47. The Government recently published a review of the UK Climate Change Programme, and December 2005 also saw important agreement in Montreal to discuss future international action beyond 2012.

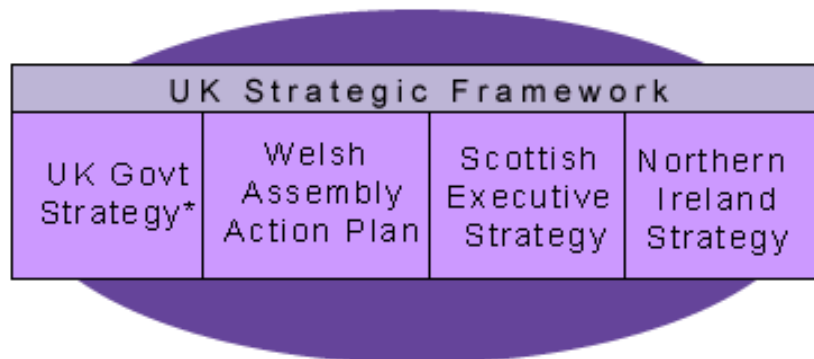
48. We need to review our approaches to conserving biodiversity, to minimise the impacts and exploit any new opportunities that emerge; we need to develop a series of principles for conservation and adaptation in context of climate change, and then build these into our country strategies and other policy frameworks; and we need to develop and promote guidance for practitioners and policy advisers about how climate change may affect their work; articulate the nature conservation angle of climate change impacts; review and disseminate scientific evidence and identify priorities for new research.

Communication

49. Finally, if we are to approach our objectives for halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 we need massively to increase the public appeal of biodiversity. Public engagement and awareness of biodiversity issues is crucial to its conservation and enhancement. The Breathing Places campaign being led by the BBC is hugely important for us in its own right, but it may also offer us a model. It provides an example where we have a shared framework, with a core set of outcomes and some key messages that are UK wide, but with each country regionalising and localising their outreach activity. We also need to consider more joined-up working with international conservation activity on communications strategy.

Conclusion

50. In conclusion, the UK BAP itself needs to be reviewed to place the UK role in the context of the more holistic country biodiversity strategies and the range of obligations facing the UK. The idea has been raised of some sort of overarching framework, similar to the UK sustainable development framework [One future different paths \(PDF , 435kb\)](#), which our respective Governments have signed up to, and which has a series of guiding principles as a foundation for further policy development.



51. We could maybe think in terms of a new set of strategic objectives for Biodiversity, making the links between the country strategies, UK, European and International objectives, making clear where action to achieve the objectives would be driven at country level, but also where there were benefits from UK wide action. It could also contribute to raising awareness of the biodiversity agenda by offering a set of agreed messages which would be easier to promote than in the current documentation. This could be closely aligned with work which Defra has begun on developing a vision for the natural environment. It is envisaged that such a document would be on behalf of the whole UK Biodiversity Partnership, rather than Government alone.

ANNEX 1

UK Overseas Territories & Crown Dependencies JNCC summary to UK Biodiversity Standing Committee

The three Crown Dependencies and 14 Overseas Territories of the United Kingdom (Table 1; hereafter referred to collectively as the 'Territories') collectively and individually make a significant contribution to global biodiversity (Table 2). Indeed, they contain significantly more globally threatened species (and more endemic species) than the metropolitan UK. In addition, they also contain significant concentrations or features of global or regional biodiversity significance. For example, Ascension has the second largest green turtle nesting population in the Atlantic (exceeded only by Tortuguero in Costa Rica); the World Heritage site of Gough island (Tristan da Cunha) is arguably the most important seabird breeding island in the world, whilst the coral reefs of the Chagos archipelago (British Indian Ocean Territory) are some of the most pristine and best protected in the Indian Ocean (and account for 1.5% of the total world resource).

However, the survival of many of the threatened species is extremely precarious: a global extinction has already occurred in the UK since the WSSD target was adopted when the only known St Helena olive tree (*Nesiota elliptica*) still in cultivation died in December 2003 (the last wild individual died in 1994). Clearly if the UK is to meet its 2010 target, we cannot allow further such losses of biodiversity.

UK relationship with the Territories

Both the Crown Dependencies and Overseas territories are self-governing with their own systems of local administration, law, courts and currency etc. However, their constitutional ties with the UK differ slightly. In both cases, the UK provides for their defence and their international relations.

Britain's links with the Overseas Territories were put on a new footing with the publication in 1999 of a White Paper: *Partnership for Progress and Prosperity: Britain & the Overseas Territories*. Amongst other things, the White Paper contained a commitment to sustainable development in the Territories and to conserve, manage and protect the rich natural heritage of the Territories. Part of the means to achieve this was by the drafting of Environment Charters, to be signed by the governments of the UK government and the relevant Territory, outlining the roles and responsibilities of each. To date all but one of the territories have signed an Environment Charter. The Overseas Territories (except for Bermuda, Gibraltar and the Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas) enjoy an association with the EU through Council decision 2001/822/EC; Gibraltar is, with some exemptions, a member of the EU. The lead department for the Overseas Territories is the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) though the Department for International Development (DFID) supports development in some of the poorer Territories.

By contrast, the White Paper referred to above and the Environment Charters do not apply to the Crown Dependencies, nor do related funding mechanisms (see below). The lead department is the Department of Constitutional Affairs (DCA).

UK's support to conservation in the Territories

The Overseas Territories Environment Programme (OTEP) is a joint fund provided by DfID and FCO (of c.£1m p.a. up to 2007) to assist Overseas Territories in implementing their Environment Charters. It is the main UK mechanism to support conservation related work in the Overseas Territories (<http://www.ukotcf.org/OTEP/index.htm>). Projects in the Overseas Territories are also eligible to compete for funding from the Darwin Initiative. These mechanisms are not available to projects in the Crown Dependencies. None of the UK Territories are eligible for GEF funding.

[Spend on biodiversity in the UK is estimated at ??£460m?]

JNCC support to conservation in the Overseas Territories

Whilst one of JNCC's programmes is devoted to the Overseas Territories, this has a programme spend in 2005-6 of £14k (excluding salary costs). This is projected to increase to £27k in 2006-7. Whilst support to the OTs is seen as important by the Joint Committee, it is understandably difficult for this to be seen as a priority for spend by the devolved administrations.

Recent JNCC activities in support of this programme have included the following.

- A review of non-native species occurring in the Territories - non-native species are a major cause of biodiversity loss in the small islands typical of our OTs & CDs (<http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-3634>).
- Support to the implementation of MEAs in the Overseas Territories. This has included, in particular, input to the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatross & Petrels (ACAP), the Indian Ocean – SE Asian Marine Turtle MoU and the SPAW Protocol as well as more global agreements such as CITES (we act as Scientific Authority to BIOT and in negotiation for the Falklands), Ramsar, World Heritage Convention, CBD (and EC Directives in the case of Gibraltar).
- Ongoing advice to FCO, Defra & DfID on issues relating to conservation in the Territories including participating in the advisory panels to OTEP and the Darwin Initiative, commenting on draft legislation and site management plans.
- Publication of the review *Biodiversity: the UK Overseas Territories*.

Could give more detail but most activity in supporting MEAs and general support to FCO etc.

Table 1**The Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies**

Territory	Area (km²)	Human population
<i>Crown Dependencies</i>		
Isle of Man	572	76,300
Bailiwick of Jersey	117	88,000
Bailiwick of Guernsey (inc. the separate entities of Guernsey, Alderney & Sark).	78	62,000
<i>Overseas Territories:</i>		
Anguilla	90	12,200
Ascension Island ¹	90	1,000
Bermuda	53	64,500
British Antarctic Territory	1,709,400	0 (permanent)
British Indian Ocean Territory	54,400	4,000 ²
British Sovereign Base Areas on Cyprus	254	?
British Virgin Islands	153	27,000
Cayman Islands	260	42,000
Falkland Islands	12,173	2,913
Gibraltar	6.5	28,231
Montserrat	102	4,483
Pitcairn	4.5	47
Saint Helena ¹	122	4,000
South Georgia & South Sandwich Islands	3,755	0 (permanent)
Tristan da Cunha ¹	98	275
Turks & Caicos Islands	430	26,000

¹ - Despite links in their governance (Ascension and Tristan da Cunha are dependencies of St Helena), we have listed Ascension Island, St Helena and Tristan da Cunha separately here.

² – military personnel only

Table 2. Numbers of globally threatened and endemic species in the UK and its Overseas Territories.

Territory	Mammals	Birds	Reptiles	Amphib.	Fish	Inverts	Plants	Total threat. spp.
Anguilla			4		11		3	18
Bermuda	2	3	2		11	25	4	47
BIOT			2		4		1	7
BVI		2	6	2	10		10	30
Cayman		3	3		10		2	19
Falklands	4	16			1		5	26
Gibraltar	1	5			10	2		18
Montserrat	1	2	3	1	11		3	21
Pitcairn		11	1		3	5	7	27
SGSSI	1	11						12
St Helena*	1	20	1		10	2	26	60
TCI		3	5		10		2	20
UK metro ¹ .	10	10			12	10	13	55

* - including dependencies of Ascension & Tristan da Cunha

Source: *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2004*.

Note that species are not necessarily mutually exclusive between Territories

ANNEX 2

SSSI “Remedies” project

Adverse condition description

Agriculture - Other
Air Pollution
Coastal Squeeze
Deer Grazing/Browsing
Drainage
Earth Science Feature Obstructed
Earth Science Feature Removed
Fertiliser Use
Fire - Other
Fish Stocking
Forestry And Woodland Management
Game Management - Other
Game Management - Pheasant Rearing
Inappropriate Coastal Management
Inappropriate Csa/Esa Prescription
Inappropriate Cutting/Mowing
Inappropriate Ditch Management
Inappropriate Dredging
Inappropriate Pest Control
Inappropriate Scrub Control
Inappropriate Stock-Feeding
Inappropriate Water Levels
Inappropriate Weed Control
Inappropriate Weirs Dams And Other Structures
Inland Flood Defence Works
Invasive Freshwater Species
Military
Moor Burning
Other - Specify In Comments
Overgrazing
Peat Extraction
Pesticide/Herbicide Use
Planning Permission - General
Planning Permission - Other Mineral And Waste
Public Access/Disturbance
Sea Fisheries
Siltation
Undergrazing
Vehicles - Illicit
Vehicles - Other
Water Abstraction
Water Pollution - Agriculture/Run Off
Water Pollution - Discharge