

GB Non-native Species Media and Communications Working Group

Meeting 5, 29th January 2009

11:00 Room 821, Millbank, London

Minutes

NB These Minutes have not been formally signed off as no further meetings have taken place.

1. Attendance and apologies

Present:

Angela Robinson - Scottish Government (Chair)
Niall Moore - NNSS (Secretary)
Olaf Booy – NNSS
Seleha Carruthers - Defra
Chris Chiverrell – CIRIA
André Farrow - Wildlife and Countryside Link
Julie Clarke - EA
Keith Davenport – OATA
Mike Heylin - FACT
Jo Long - SEPA
Simon MacKown - Defra
Robin Payne – SNH
Alison Smith – WAG
Angela Taylor - Defra
Mark Tollitt - Defra

Apologies received from:

Jim Collins – PCT
David Gilchrist – HTA
Deborah Long – Scottish Environment Link
Ben McCarthy – NE
Paul Walton – replaced by André Farrow

2. Update on public awareness research

The quantitative element of the public awareness research has been investigating three groups: the general public (including gardeners), anglers and the horticultural trade. SM reported on the initial results for the general public and anglers. Research is still being carried out into the horticultural trade.

SM reported that the results indicated the general public:

- were reasonably aware of the term 'non-native', but were less aware of the term 'invasive non-native';
- recognised the term 'non-native' more widely than 'alien';
- had strong support for the killing of invasive non-native species for various reasons, as long as it was humane and regulated;
- rarely disposed of plants in a way that may be problematic;
- were most likely to obtain plants from garden centres, DIY stores and friends and family, but do not often use the internet.

SM reported that the results indicated anglers:

- were more aware of the term invasive non-native species than the general public;
- were strongly concerned about the risks posed by non-native species;
- would be amenable to changing their behaviour, but would resist changing the use of stink bags.

ACTION 1 – *NM to circulate the PowerPoint presentation of results of the public awareness survey.*

ACTION 2 – *NM to get the demographic details of the anglers contacted and send to MH.*

3. Comments on draft strategy document

AR noted that the strategy document must be complete by end of February 2009 to enable sufficient time for it to be sent to Programme Board members before their next meeting. All additional comments on this draft of the strategy to be sent to the NNSS by 6th February.

ACTION 3 – *All to send further comments on the initial draft strategy document to NNSS by 6th February.*

The group discussed the use of the term 'strategy' in the title of the document and agreed that calling it a 'plan' or a 'strategic plan' would be more appropriate. In addition, an executive summary will need to be added at the front of the document and the more detailed tactical issues need to be moved to annexes. All agreed that a section on economic costs incurred as a result of invasive species was required to illustrate the benefits of the strategy and justify its costs.

KD and others noted that the tone of initial sections of the document needs improvement (specifically emphasising the positive), including explaining why the three pathways were chosen and making it clear that the strategy involves

working in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders. AF and CC suggested that climate change and the wider world situation on INNS needs to be mentioned within the document.

The group agreed that an additional section should be included within the document identifying the potential risks / threats to the strategy and what measures could be adopted to mitigate them (e.g. managing bad publicity). The working group also agreed that a small section summarising the results of the public awareness research should be added.

ACTION 4 – *AR/NM to alter tone, structure and definitions in the front end of the document*

ACTION 5 – *AR/NM to write section on potential risks / threats.*

ACTION 6 - *MT to ask Defra Press Office to identify potential risks / threats in 2009.*

ACTION 7 – *SM to add public awareness section to draft strategy document.*

JC suggested that the aims and objectives of the strategy be restructured to make them clearer. MH noted that the aims of this document should be at a broad level with more specific objectives set at the implementation level. It was agreed that the aims would be aspirational as opposed to quantitative and measurable (but that these might be possible once campaigns were being developed). KD warned against making a rod for our own backs by over-complication.

RP identified that phases 1 – 3 were useful, but elements of each phase may need to be provided at different stages in the timeline (i.e. some elements of phase 2 and 3 may need to be provided in 2009-10 etc.). The group agreed that this needed clarification in the text.

AS noted that the ‘key pathways’ section may give the wrong impression that pathways other than the three described are not relevant. She suggested that text was needed to explain this is not the case and detail how the three pathways were chosen (i.e. to focus effort and reach ‘low-hanging fruit’). The group agreed this.

It was agreed that further input was required on the ‘call to action’ messages. All members of the group agreed to provide a list of what they consider are the key messages. It was also agreed that messages should be tiered and released in stages to avoid clouding the main issues. Once agreed, JC recommended that the messages be refined by a specialist agency.

ACTION 8 – *AR/NM to restructure aims and objectives of the strategy.*

ACTION 9 – *NM to provide text explaining that phases 1-3 are not mutually exclusive.*

ACTION 10 – *AR/NM to include text to explain the reasons for choosing the 3 pathways and explaining that other pathways are also relevant.*

ACTION 11 – *All to provide lists of what they think the key messages are in order of priority.*

ACTION 12 – *AS to draft text for the Training section that is relevant to the business sector.*

ACTION 13 – *MH to draft text for the Training section that is relevant to the volunteer sector.*

The group discussed the issue of branding and logos and decided that the existing NNSS logo will remain the main logo for the overall work of the group, with individual brands being developed for each campaign where relevant.

MH expressed desire for a children's section on the NNSS website and also suggested that the costs detailed in the draft document be provided as minimum spend costs.

4. AOB

There was no AOB.

5. Date of next meeting

None - last scheduled meeting. The chair thanked everyone for their input into the development of the document.