

**PROGRAMME BOARD ON NON-NATIVE SPECIES
FOURTEENTH MEETING**

MINUTES

**ROOM GO10, WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT, CATHAYS PARK, CARDIFF
TUESDAY 2 FEBRUARY 2010, 11.15**

1. Attendance / apologies

Present:

Francis Marlow (Defra, Chair)
Olaf Booy (NNSS, Secretary)
Sallie Bailey (FC)
Jessa Battersby (JNCC)
Richard Cowan (Defra)
Mark Diamond (EA)
Verity Hunter (NNSS, Minute taker)
Diana Reynolds (WAG)
Pete Robertson (Fera)
Angela Robinson (Scottish Govt)
Huw Thomas (Defra)

Apologies received from:

Niall Moore (NNSS)

2. Minutes of 13th meeting on 21 September 2009

Paper circulated – PB Feb10-02

The minutes of the 13th meeting were agreed.

3. Actions / matters arising

Paper circulated – PB Feb10-03

Action 2 – OB reported that the NNSS is progressing a possible Marine Working Group and is working with JNCC and others to build a list of invitees, including more industry representation. There was some discussion of the scope of the WG and it was agreed that there should be an aquaculture emphasis. RC queried whether the purpose of the WG is to produce a strategy or to look at specific organisms and said that other organisations deal with issues such as ballast water or coastal areas. He suggested recirculating the scoping document from a previous Programme Board meeting as a reminder, also giving the Marine Management Organisation the opportunity to comment.

ACTION 1 – NNSS to recirculate the Marine Working Group scoping document, together with an update on the current position. The MMO are also to be asked for their views.

Actions 4 – OB reported that Paper Sep09-04B (Strategy Implementation – future work) is being edited and redrafted and, once finalised, will be placed on the NNSS website.

ACTION 2 – NNSS to annex Paper Sep09-04B to the Implementation Plan on the website after suitable editing.

Action 7 – NM has met with Government officials to discuss how to progress work on Pacific Oysters. The risk assessment is awaiting comments and the NNRAP will finalise this before a workshop (including industry representation) to discuss the matter.

Action 15 – OB said that no response has been received to the letter written to Dr Clark about commercial exploitation of Mitten Crab. His conference is planned for March and will include speakers from Defra and EA.

All the other actions had been discharged.

There were no matters arising.

4. GB Strategy

- **Implementation plan (forward / reverse look)**

Paper circulated – PB Feb10-04

OB introduced Paper 04, beginning with the Reverse Look and speaking only about the items on Amber:

6.5 – OB noted that the first PAP to be produced is likely to relate to the marine environment including recreational boating, this could be an item to include in the marine workshop as well as of use to those working on the response to *Didemnum vexillum*.

7.2 – OB noted that prioritisation was an issue that the country working groups were looking into. MD asked if there will be coherence across countries when determining species priority lists. HT and others said different countries will have different priorities. OB agreed to report back the results of the country working group prioritisation exercises to the Programme Board.

ACTION 3 - NNSS to report back the results of the country working group prioritisation exercises to the Programme Board.

7.12 – HT said the Rapid Response WG felt it would not have been the most productive use of its time to attempt to produce a general contingency plan until the proposed Rapid Response framework was known to be acceptable and possibly embedded into operational procedures.

OB then introduced the Forward Look where items 6.7, 7.11 and 8.3 needed a decision from the Programme Board. These items had been incorporated into the current Agenda.

5. NNSS Report

Paper circulated – PB Feb10-05

OB summarised this paper.

Biosecurity good practice

HT asked if this will be comprehensive and published countrywide. OB said the advice is aimed specifically at contractors/surveyors etc and is intended to be applicable across GB. SB commented that it is difficult to separate the two issues of non-native species and diseases, especially since plant health is GB-wide and non-devolved. OB said the guidance is unlikely to separate disease and non-natives.

ACTION 4 – NNSS to circulate the biosecurity good practice document to the Programme Board for comment before finalising.

Country Working Groups

OB reported that the England WG has set up subgroups to develop advice for the appropriate labelling / naming of plants in the trade and guidance for the appropriate disposal of INNS. The Wales WG is continuing to develop targets for INNS linked with the biodiversity action planning and WFD river basement management process. They are also carrying out an audit of non-native species in Wales. The Scotland WG is also considering species prioritisation.

EU IAS Group

HT explained that the NNSS and Defra are now part of an informal advisory panel for the contractor that is developing the European Strategy; however HT noted that he had caveated UK participation in the consultants' work so that it should not prejudice the UK's negotiating position in any later negotiations with the Commission and Member States about the final form an EU strategy. The issues are very complex, e.g. they will involve interaction with both the plant and animal health regimes too.

All-Ireland WG

NM is now on the Steering Group for Invasive Species Ireland. This has separate strategies developing for Northern Ireland and the Republic with legislative proposals in progress.

Local action Toolkit and Workshop

OB reported that a successful workshop had been held in January bringing together representatives from a range of local action groups to help determine what should be included in the local action group toolkit. Many good ideas had been generated and there was an appetite for similar annual meetings and regional meetings. Local groups now have an area on the new website and resources are being developed including communications tools and guidance on priorities. HT and AR agreed there is real energy and enthusiasm among the local groups and the NNSP can be valuable in helping them to coordinate and maximise their efforts.

Economic impact research

AR reported that the initial draft report from CABI needs more work, including peer review.

Future work programme

NNSIP – HT said that the first of the three years for the portal's development had just been completed and there should be an update available for the next Programme Board meeting. MD asked about the timescale for judging the success of the NNSIP and thought it was not less than ten years. HT has stressed to many stakeholders that as soon as it is ready for engagement with data providers, achieving 'critical mass' as soon as possible will be critical to ensuring its future as a resource for all. HT and OB said that on 22 March the NBN will launch their public reporting campaign to monitor 6 invasive non-native species. This is exploring development of another aspect of the NNSIP.

Website re-launch

OB said the new website was launched on 1 February.

6. Rapid Response

- **Working Group Final Report**
Paper circulated – PB Feb10-06A

HT (as Chair of the Rapid Response WG) gave a presentation on this item covering the main points in the report. The report was signed off following minor changes and some further period for comment (set out below).

RC stated that the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) could have a role in coordinating a response and should be considered in the process (particularly as they will have links to port authorities etc).

SB said the organisations need to be consulted in advance and shown the mechanism so that there are no surprises in the event of a live response and the meeting agreed. The meeting agreed that Programme Board members may circulate the current report internally within their organisations (to give a 'heads up'). Opportunity to circulate the report and provide any comments is one month. Any urgent matters should be raised with Defra, WAG or Scottish Government as appropriate.

MD noted that the Programme Board need not always be asked to approve a rapid response decision. If required, the Programme Board could be consulted electronically (i.e. no need to wait for the next Programme Board meeting). MD also noted that the precautionary principle should be built into the approach more explicitly. HT noted that the report envisages 'escalation' of issues to the Board as and when necessary.

RC noted that rapid response to invasive non-native species was not entirely different to the response to an oil spill.

Following finalisation of the report Defra will draft an MoU for relevant organisations to obtain their 'buy in'. The Programme Board Chair will invite relevant organisations across GB to sign up to the process. Scottish and Welsh Ministers may also write to relevant organisations in Scotland and Wales.

NNSS to review the Rapid Response process in the light of *Didemnum* work.

ACTION 5 – HT to add MMO to the 'coordinating body' diagram. Chair to invite the MMO to be part of the RR Core Group.

ACTION 6 – HT to make two minor modifications to Annex 5: add a dotted arrow from the statutory nature conservation bodies to the box on which sector is primarily impacted, and to specify that JNCC's marine interests are regarding biodiversity only.

ACTION 7 – ALL to consider circulating the report internally if necessary to provide a 'heads up'. There is 1 month to provide comments on the report. Any urgent issues should be flagged to HT as soon as possible.

ACTION 8 – NNSS to review the process in light of the *Didemnum* work.

ACTION 9 – HT to circulate a draft MoU to Programme Board members and allow 2-3 weeks for comment, then finalise. (Draft will first need to go round the working group members).

ACTION 10 – Chair to invite relevant organisations to sign up in England, Scotland and Wales respectively.

- ***Didemnum* update**
Paper circulated – PB Feb10-06B

No substantive comments. Defer position until next meeting, at which ISAP should be drafted.

ACTION 11 – NNSS to keep Programme Board informed about developments outside of Programme Board meetings.

- **Eagle owl**
Paper circulated – PB Feb10-06C

Programme Board support position that a precautionary approach should be taken (where possible) to prevent further spread / establishment of this species until the risk assessment is complete (i.e. all comments about scientific evidence have been considered and addressed where relevant). Although it was noted that implementation of this might be difficult. On completion, the risk assessment should be circulated to Programme Board for final position to be decided. The Programme Board noted that any decision would have to be subject to ministerial agreement.

- **Individual species actions**
Paper circulated – PB Feb10-06D

OB summarised this paper. SB reported that Oak Processionary Moth is still causing some concern to the FC and meetings with landowners are ongoing. MD reported that EA is generally gaining on the Topmouth Gudgeon problem but there had been some operational difficulties in Turkey Brook.

7. Media and Communications

- **Aquatic plants PR campaign**

Paper circulated - PB Feb10-07

AR reported that a partnership marketing company (Billington Cartmell) and a PR company (Forster) had been appointed to run the campaign, intended to encourage pond owners to help prevent invasive species from spreading into the wild. The launch will be on 24 February with English and Scottish Ministers. The meeting approved of the display materials.

[Item 8 on the Agenda – the lunchtime talk by CABI – was postponed to a later Programme Board meeting.]

9. Risk analysis

Paper circulated – PB Feb10-09A

OB updated the meeting on the current status of the commissioned risk assessments. OB also presented the list of species for which risk assessments were underway and in respect of which climate change was considered likely to affect the species ability to become invasive. MD asked why fish are not included. OB said that this was because of the two fish that had been assessed climate change had not been considered an issue in the risk assessment, but that he would revisit the list. MD asked whether risk assessors can be asked to give some idea of the proximity of

the problem or climatic tolerances (e.g. minimum thresholds for seed germination) and members thought this would be useful to inform decisions.

ACTION 12 – NNSS (in consultation with the NNRAP) to develop a list of factors for risk assessors to take into account with regard to climate change.

PR asked if there are trends within species groups and whether this could be used for prioritising action. OB said that the NNRAP already looks for such patterns. AR thought the risk assessment summary chart needs common as well as scientific names and the meeting agreed.

ACTION 13 – NNSS to amend risk assessment summary chart to include common names.

- **Risk management**

Paper circulated – PB Feb10-09B

The Programme Board were asked to advise how the NNSS should progress the risk management side of risk analysis and were presented with various options and examples. This was divided into how to display the summary of risk management and what process should be used to develop the detailed information that backed up the summary.

Summarising risk management options.

HT thought one of the questions for consideration should be 'feasibility'/how and who would be likely to deliver it; and that recommended approaches might cover options or a combination of options. The Programme Board favoured combining options 1 (a series of tick boxes / form fields) and 3 (report style following a series of guidance). The NNSS will now develop the summary on this basis. The summary will take the form of a report, which will be developed using a series of guidance so that it always covers key points, in addition to a series of tick boxes / form fields to summarise information that can be more easily standardised.

Risk management process.

OB then asked what process should be used to produce and validate the assessment of management options? Estimated costs for the process are based on the production of five or six assessments per year. RC asked if there would be a retrospective element but the meeting thought this not to be cost-effective unless there is a very specific need to revisit a species. FM preferred the workshop option and OB said the NNSS would have to produce a substantial dossier for any workshop. HT was wary of setting up yet another panel (the third option of a new risk management committee). He said there is a need for flexibility. The Programme Board agreed that Option b – risk management workshops – was the most likely to be successful and should include both Government and industry representation. The NNSS are to write up, refine and trial the process, reporting the results back to the Programme Board. The Programme Board noted that the workshop could help draft the basic structure of any ISAP if necessary.

ACTION 14 – NNSS to develop and trial risk management based on species specific workshops and summarise the results in a report form with some information standardised in tick boxes / form fields.

ACTION 15 – NNSS to develop and trial risk management based on risk management workshops and summarise the results in a report on no more than three pages that includes some of the content and format of the current summary tool.

10. Invasive Species Action Plans (ISAPs)

Papers circulated – PB Feb10-10A and 10B)

The Water Primrose ISAP was signed off, following minor modifications. This will be the first ISAP to receive Programme Board sign off.

In addition, the Programme Board has determined that the following ISAPs should be prioritised:

- Carpet Sea Squirt
- Non-native Crayfish
- Chinese Mitten Crab
- Floating Pennywort
- Australian Swamp-stonecrop
- Parrot's Feather

ACTION 16 – NNSS to work with others to progress priority ISAPs.

11. Stakeholder Forum

Paper circulated – PB Feb10-11)

There was varied discussion of the proposed programme for the Forum and some alternative suggestions were received. The NNSS said they would modify the proposals based on the suggestions received.

ACTION 17 – NNSS to revisit the proposed programme for the Stakeholder Forum in the light of suggestions made.

12. Ministerial Report

Paper circulated – PB Feb10-12)

The meeting thought this contained useful information for Government representatives but felt that it is not yet ready in terms of tone and content. HT thought the highlights could be better brought out. MD wondered about a newsletter

format, perhaps as a contribution to International Biodiversity Year, and HT thought it could be a general document on the website. In view of the forthcoming election and possible change of Ministers the Programme Board felt that this is not now a matter of urgency and can be progressed more slowly, perhaps as a briefing document. HT and AR thought they could help modify the text of the report.

ACTION 18 – NNSS to continue dialogue on format and content of the Ministerial Report.

13. WFD monies – update

No substantive comments. Contracts had been agreed for the funds destined for biological control research.

14. Marine issues

This item was covered in earlier Agenda items.

15. Emerging issues

- **Scottish Legislative Review – update**

AR had no specific matters to update.

- **E&W legislative changes**

HT reported that Defra have produced guidance on interpretation of the elements that make up the offences in Section 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

16. AOB

No matters were raised under this item.

17. Date and location of future meetings

FM suggested that the next meeting be held in June in London.

ACTION 19 – VH to circulate dates for a meeting in June in London.

The Chair closed by reminding members that this was Richard Cowan's final Programme Board. He thanked Richard for his valued contributions over many years and the meeting concurred.