

Inter-Agency Committee on Marine Science and Technology

Minutes

Thirty-seventh Plenary meeting held on Thursday 6th May 2004 from 10:30 in Defra, Room B01, Cromwell House, Dean Stanley Street, Westminster, London.

Present: Dr Miles Parker, Acting Chairman Mr David Palmer, Environment Agency Dr Robin Cook, FRS Mr Bob Simpson, HSE Dr John Lock, Defra Mr Jon Turton, Met Office (for Dr Mitchell) Dr Phil Newton, NERC	Secretariat: Mr Trevor Guymer
Independent Members: Prof Mike Cowling Mr Ian Townend Prof Peter Liss	Visitors: Dr John Portmann Mr Prashant Vaze, Prime Minister's Strategy Unit Mr Chris Tompkins, Defra
	Apologies: Mr Graeme Cobb, DTI Dr John Mitchell, Met Office Dr Peter Hedges, EPSRC Prof Howard Dalton, Chairman Dr Graham Bryce, OST Dr Sydney Neill, DARD Mr Frank Wall, DfT Mr Andrew Levi, FCO Dr Bruce Callander, MOD

Minutes of the Thirty-sixth Meeting (15 January 2004)

These were approved subject to correcting Item 1.4. The number of outline bids received for NERC's RAPID programme was 34 (not 4).

Actions

All had been completed apart from the following:

Obtain copy of report of ERANet meeting (Defra). John Lock will pass the report from the January meeting to the Secretariat for circulation to members.

Circulate details of Defra SIP (Spatial Information Programme). John Lock will pass on report for circulation to members.

Matters Arising

The way ahead for IACMST.

1.1 Following an initial airing at the January meeting, further comments were made. The Gregynog workshop was considered to have been valuable and worth repeating. A number of the conclusions were being implemented in various ways. A list of related ongoing initiatives would be circulated. It was decided that the September plenary should include discussion on a possible Gregynog-2. This could feed into the Environmental Research Funders' Forum. Mike Cowling should be consulted on organization of the workshop, based on experience with the Gregynog-1.

Action 1: To circulate list of ongoing initiatives related to Gregynog conclusions. Secretariat

Action 2: To produce a paper for the September meeting on the possible aims and structure of a Gregynog-2, following consultation with MJC who had been involved in G-1. Secretary

ERANets.

1.2 Phil Newton reported that the proposal coordinated by the ESF Marine Board for a marine ERANet, on which IACMST had been granted observer status, had scored 27/30 and was now in the contract negotiation stage. 12 EU states were involved with a further 12 to be added. It was hoped that optimisation of European infra-structure would result, particularly as the project brought funders together. NERC was leading a working group on creating joint programmes. The funding would cover costs of IACMST participation at meetings; normally, Phil Newton would attend representing both IACMST and NERC. A summary of the proposal was available. The meeting was reminded that IACMST is able to feed views into the Marine Board on an ongoing basis via Phil Newton; although a meeting was scheduled for the following week no papers were available yet.

Action 3: To circulate summary of MarinERA proposal to members. Secretary

1.3 John Lock reported that the Defra-led ERANet on flooding was likely to be funded. The UK coordinator was Peter Allen-Williams. Plans were also being developed for an ERANet of national marine fisheries funders, led by Defra (John Lock). This would be taking a 10-year forward look and ICES and EFARO were engaged in the process. It was likely that ERANets would be required as precursors to successful bids for FP7 funding.

2. Net benefits

2.1 This item had been arranged to follow the recent publication of the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit report on a possible strategy for the future of the UK fishing industry. This report "Net Benefits" is over 200 pages long. There was scope for IACMST potential involvement in some areas identified in the report and relevant extracts had been provided to members with the committee papers.

2.2 Prashant Vaze, Deputy Team Leader for the study, delivered a presentation which included an overview of the study's strategic recommendations. Present management structures were rather ill-defined and the Common Fisheries Policy needed to be reformed. At a bare minimum, 13% of the fishing effort for whitefish needed to be removed from the fishing fleet. A separate paper on environmental science aspects was being produced. It was desirable to incorporate a broader range of science, e.g. climate science rather than restriction to fisheries science. The report argued that in many policy areas fisheries should be subject to the same criteria as other marine 'users', e.g. there should be Environmental Impact Assessments for new fishery gear. There was also a desire to avoid disputes between government and industry over the validity of the data used to set quotas. The PMSU team had now

dispersed and government departments would be responding over the next few months.

2.3 The Chairman thanked the presenter and stated that adequate discussion of the report's detailed findings would require a separate discussion by IACMST. The key focus for immediate discussion should be on the process to be followed, identifying inter-agency issues and the next steps to be taken. It emerged that Defra have set up a cross-cutting response team with eight working groups identified and which was planning to have an initial response ready by Autumn 2004. Phil Newton reported that NERC had already approved exploration of ideas raised by the study and a meeting involving NERC, Defra, SEERAD and DARDNI was planned later in May to discuss how the four bodies could work together better. Potentially, this was a high priority area for NERC. One possibility was the holding of an open meeting leading to a call for proposals.

2.4 It was noted that none of the Defra working groups was for science per se, though it would obviously come into several aspects. Peter Liss suggested the need for a 9th WG on science could emerge from the workshop and that consideration could be given at the meeting to the role that IACMST should play. There was some concern that the May workshop excluded some relevant organisations, e.g. the fisheries side of EA. Robin Cook supported the wider involvement of marine labs but cautioned against expecting too much given the limitation of UK academia working in this field. The overall size of the present funding available for scientific underpinning was a vital factor. Prashant Vaze responded that no view had been taken on budget levels in the PMSU study.

Action 4. To keep members informed and engaged on the workshop and working group areas, as appropriate. Phil Newton and John Lock

Action 5. Item to appear on the agenda of the September Plenary with more time for discussion. Secretary

3. Global Marine Assessment

3.1 This item had been placed on the agenda following reference to GMA at the January Plenary and the desire for members to be more informed on what was entailed and the present status of any planning. Chris Tompkins (Defra) introduced the topic giving some background. There was general concern about governance of the oceans and there was also a lack of coherence in the underpinning science. It was hoped that IMO, WMO, IOC and UNEP could work together in addressing the problem. He referred to the circulated paper, the draft report of the Group of Experts' meeting held at the UN in March 2004, and explained its context. It would form part of the discussion at a GMA workshop to be held within the annual UN ICP meeting in June which Secretary would be attending. GMA documents would be considered in more detail within the UN system in the next few months, particularly within the Law of the Sea department, culminating in a resolution at the General Assembly in the Autumn to formally establish the GMA process by the end of 2004 (as set by WSSD in Johannesburg, 2002). Although the workshop will not constitute formal national positions the UK has submitted its initial response. It welcomes a two-year initiation

phase but recognises that significant issues of concern remain, including the level of proposed funding and the setting up of a secretariat.

3.2 The Chairman thanked the presenter and posed the question: where do we go from here? John Portmann commented that the ideas proposed for GMA built on previous work by GESAMP but appeared more complicated. Peter Liss was concerned that little reference was made to climate; although IPCC existed to deal with this topic, GMA could not be entirely separate. Chris Tompkins pointed out that although IPCC provided a model the scope of GMA would have to be smaller. Chairman pointed out the need for openness and peer review to be emphasised and stated the view that GESAMP had never properly succeeded. Other points raised included the need to ensure that national inputs (e.g. State of the Seas in the UK) were not precluded in the drive to have a regional basis, and to recognise that the process was bound to be evolutionary.

3.3 The Chairman requested that members feed any comments pertinent to the workshop at the ICP meeting.

Action 6: Members to send comments to Secretary by the end of May. All.

4. Marine data and information - where to now?

4.1 Mike Cowling outlined progress since January, focusing on the operation of the Expert Group. Although the original idea had been to evaluate different potential models the Group had unanimously agreed to work towards the establishment of a partnership within which a framework for data exchange, etc would be developed. The final report was out for consultation among members of the EG but the recommendations were being brought to Plenary for agreement in principle and to seek views on options for the way the new Partnership would relate to Plenary. A Gateway of Gateways had been discussed but would require significant additional funding. Most of the rest of the planned activities could be achieved using existing funding within the organisations. There was sufficient funding in the remainder of the Defra contract plus central IACMST funding to meet costs of meetings over the next few months. Mike Cowling concluded with the comment that it was important to capitalise on the enthusiasm which had been generated.

4.2 At the outset of the discussion it was agreed that the recommendations would be agreed en bloc rather than separately. Detailed comments were to be sent to Mike Cowling by 14 May, the same deadline as for the Expert Group.

4.3 Ian Townend opened the discussion saying that he had taken soundings from non-involved parties and found a positive response to the report and its recommendations. It was an ambitious programme which would need the proactive commitment of individual departments in order to succeed. There were some subtle aspects relating to the private sector. Although the provision of infrastructure needs to be viewed in the same way as for other sectors, a different approach was required for the handling of value-added products and services where resale for commercial exploitation was involved. Other members welcomed the report but there was extensive discussion on the role of the partnership vis a vis that of MEDAG and the

consequent implications for funding if an additional action group were to be formed. Some could see no difference between the two, others considered that though there was considerable overlap MEDAG's heritage and wider remit, e.g. regarding international activities should not be lost. One member preferred the Partnership to be a separate group with the role of MEDAG to be reviewed.

4.4 It was agreed that

- (a) the recommendations be adopted in principle (subject to there being no significant change as a result of the concurrent review by the Expert Group),
- (b) progress should be maintained through further meetings of the EG implementing the work plan using existing resources. During this phase ideas for the Gateway would be given further consideration and, if appropriate, a costed proposal would be prepared,
- (c) the Data Partnership should report through MEDAG, with the likelihood that MEDAG itself would undergo significant evolution to accommodate the new activity.

4.5 It was also accepted that the Partnership would require a committed chair plus a designated person to coordinate the activity.

Action 7: To submit the report to Defra. MEDAG to consider how best to incorporate the Data Partnership activities. Mike Cowling

5. Action Group Chairs' items

5.1 *MEDAG.* Mike Cowling informed members that a meeting of MEDAG would be held soon; a separate session for funding partners was planned. He suggested an open meeting on Data might be held in the Autumn.

Action 8: To discuss options for the open meeting. Mike Cowling and Secretary

5.2 *GOOSAG.* Ian Townend's report divided into two parts.

- (i) For information only, he reported on the main issues from the GOOSAG meeting on 6th May. Unfortunately, Defra had not been represented. The GOOSAG contribution to the UK monitoring strategy had been completed and member departments had committed to supporting this. Similarly, the Marine Processes and Climate sector contribution to the State of the Seas Report had been submitted following a meeting in February to review its contents. A copy was on the restricted part of the OceanNet website. Two of the recommendations required IACMST support. A strategy document for a UK ocean modelling system had been produced. Further progress would await agreement on establishing the core partnership (Met Office, POL, PML), which would be discussed by the Met Office Board following the arrival of the next Chief Executive in July.

Action 9: Members to send any concerns over the MPC recommendations to John Portmann/Secretary by 31 May. All

- (ii) IACMST's advice was sought on Argo and Met Office marine observing moorings. GOOSAG was of the view that the scientific case for the Argo

programme was now well made and that ways should be found of funding the programme on a sustained basis. These costs would have to be borne out of operational rather than R&D budgets – a transition that was not easy. [Open Forum] The Met Office was holding a meeting with users on 10th May to discuss priorities for its in situ observations, given the increasing reliance being placed on satellite data. A particular issue for GOOSAG was the future of the long-term moorings around the UK; it was important that the interests of the wider UK community were taken into account in any decisions. The question had arisen of how such measurements should be funded if they lay outside the envelope of the Met Office core customer group. Since funding mechanisms were a key Ian Townend, together with John Portmann and Secretary had held a meeting with ODPM to discuss, in general terms, the mechanisms for cross-departmental initiatives in future Spending Reviews. Early liaison with Treasury over possible ideas for the 2006 SR was recommended and Ian Townend suggested that IACMST Secretary could be tasked with scoping a project with a view to putting it before Treasury in October.

Action 10: To circulate to members, ahead of the September Plenary, a costed set of proposals appropriate for a cross-departmental Spending Review submission on a UK marine observing programme. Secretary

5.3 The Chairman reiterated the complications associated with the move to non-R&D funding sources and suggested that the margins of the forthcoming IACMST Open Forum on Argo might be used to explore this further. Phil Newton drew attention to the international Group for Earth Observations which was seeking to engage ministers in the implementation of observing systems. Secretary noted that Howard Dalton had taken over as UK lead on the GEO process and, given his IACMST role, this provided an opportunity to develop a coherent UK approach.

Action 11: To discuss funding issues and GEO with Howard Dalton. Secretary

6. Oceanology International

6.1 A paper had been circulated reporting on IACMST's involvement in Oceanology International in 2004 and proposing an enhanced presence at the next exhibition in 2006 with financial sponsorship extended beyond Defra, EA, Met Office and UKHO to all IACMST partners. Although the event had been very successful little enthusiasm was expressed, in the very limited time available for discussion, for a significant increase in IACMST's participation for 2006.

7. AOB

7.1 Secretary informed members that one of the agenda items at the September Plenary was likely to be 'Underwater noise and impacts on marine mammals'.

7.2 At the recent meeting of GOOSAG questions had been raised about a study on monitoring being conducted by the Environmental Research Funders' Forum. David Palmer, who was chairing the study group, reassured the meeting that marine issues

formed only a small part of the activity and that it complemented rather than conflicted with IACMST activities.

IACMST 37th Plenary Meeting
Thursday 6th May 2004

Action List

Action No	Action	Agenda	Action Required by
1	To circulate list of ongoing initiatives related to Gregynog conclusions.	1.1	Secretariat
2	To produce a paper for the September meeting on the possible aims and structure of a Gregynog-2, following consultation with MJC who had been involved in G-1.	1.1	Secretary
3	To circulate summary of MarinERA proposal to members	1.2	Secretariat
4	To keep members informed and engaged on the workshop and working group areas, as appropriate.	2.4	Phil Newton and John Lock
5	Item to appear on the agenda of the September Plenary with more time for discussion.	2.4	Secretary
6	Members to send comments to Secretary by the end of May.	3.3	All
7	To submit the report to Defra. MEDAG to consider how best to incorporate the Data Partnership activities	4.5	Mike Cowling
8	To discuss options for the open meeting.	5.1	Mike Cowling and Secretary
9	All members to send any concerns over the MPC recommendations to John Portmann/Secretary by 31 May	5.2(i)	All
10	To circulate to members, ahead of the September Plenary, a costed set of proposals appropriate for a cross-departmental Spending Review submission on a UK marine observing programme.	5.2(ii)	Secretary
11	Discuss funding issues and GEO with Prof Howard Dalton	5.3	Secretary