

Inter-Agency Committee on Marine Science and Technology

Minutes

Fortieth Plenary Meeting held on Tuesday 24th May 2005 from 1030 in Defra, Room 808, Nobel House, Smith Square, Westminster, London.

Present Prof Howard Dalton, Defra, (Chair) Dr Robin Cook, FRS Dr John Lock, Defra Dr Phil Newton, NERC Mr David Palmer, EA Mr Bob Simpson, HSE Dr Steven Spall, MOD	Secretariat Mr Trevor Guymer
Independent Members Prof Mike Cowling Prof Peter Liss Mr Ian Townend	Visitors Beth Greenaway, Defra John Roberts, Defra
	Apologies Mr Tim Bostock, Dfid Dr Richard Briggs, DARDNI Ms Theresa Crossley, DfT Mr Martin Fidler, FCO Mr David Foskett, DTI Dr Nigel Heriz-Smith, OST Dr John Mitchell, Met Office Mr Phil Burnell, EPSRC

Apologies

The Secretary read out the list of apologies received.

Minutes of the Thirty-ninth Meeting (Thursday, 13th January, 2005)

These were approved.

Actions

All actions had been completed and would be reported on under either matters arising or under specific Agenda items.

Matters Arising

Marine bioresources.

1.1 Phil Newton, speaking on behalf of John Lock and Robin Cook, introduced this item. He gave the background including the Net Benefits report produced by the PM's Strategy Unit. A draft scoping report (~ 50 pages length) had been circulated. The programme manager, Manuel Barrange, would be handling comments and the report was expected to be finalised within 2 weeks. The report contained an exploration of strengths / weaknesses / gaps in required science. It identified problems at institute level but also suggested solutions. One idea was to create a neutral platform (along the lines of a Marine Foresight Partnership). Several themes were proposed. The next stage was for potential funders to take stock and explore how to take the

proposal forward. One question was how IACMST might be involved; a presentation could be made to a future meeting of Plenary.

1.2 John Lock added that the report also contains a list of institutes and their capabilities. It was a positive response to the Net Benefit report and could be seen as a way of implementing some of the recommendations made in that study. No costings had been provided but it may be appropriate to provide these to ERFF within the next few months. Robin Cook voiced caution, seeing Marine Bioresources as primarily a NERC-led response. There will also be Whitehall and Scottish responses which might produce different ideas. He was also concerned that there might have been a change in NERC priorities for this subject. However, Phil Newton emphasised this was not the case; it was just that there were less resources generally as a result of the recent Spending Review settlement. In more general discussion it was noted that significant involvement of the universities was envisaged; this reflected NERC's wish to move beyond its own institutes.

MEDAG Review

1.3 David Palmer updated the meeting. In addition to the list of names circulated he suggested that Ralph Rayner join the group. Chair stated that he was concerned over the number of MEDAG members in the group; it should contain more independent members.

Action: David Palmer to revisit the proposed membership of the group.

Indian Ocean tsunami

1.4 This topic had been raised under AoB in January. Secretary reported on various activities he had been involved in as UK representative to the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO. UNESCO have approached the UK for help in setting up a tsunami warning system for the Indian Ocean and this was under consideration by DfID. The UK had also contributed to meetings on the principles for reconstruction and on the effect of the tsunami on coral systems.

ERANets

1.5 There was to be a meeting of MarinERA in June but an agenda had not yet been provided. This would guide the decision as to whether IACMST needs to be directly represented. John Lock also announced that following successful evaluation he would be coordinating a fisheries ERANet and Defra were also participating in another ERANet on pollution.

INSPIRE

1.6 Correspondence had taken place with David King. Chairman would circulate correspondence.

Action: Chairman/Secretary

At the suggestion of the Chairman, it was agreed to move Item 6 (Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership) to follow Item 2 as John Roberts would have to leave before the end of the meeting.

2 Underwater Noise Working Group

2.1 An interim report on the progress of this Working Group was tabled and introduced by the Group's chairman, Peter Liss. The name of the Group had been changed to sound rather than

noise as this was more neutral. The group had been set up following presentation and discussion at the September 2004 Plenary, since which the group had met three times. It had completed its phase of gathering evidence and had begun to generate recommendations. A draft of the final report was to be written by the end of July. He suggested that some of the study's output could be incorporated into the proposed Marine Bill. IACMST would not be able to take forward the recommendations itself but may be able to play a role. It was a bigger issue than originally thought.

2.2 John Roberts pointed out that there was growing interest on the international scene, e.g. OSPAR, via NGO input to UNICP. To bring about legislation a case would have to be made and international agreement would be needed involving, for example, DTI and IMO. The key role of the report would be to give an integrated view of the science involved; others could devise the regulatory aspects. A draft marine bill was expected in about a year and the policy work would need to be completed in that timeframe. Some of the existing legislation could be used. Environmental Impact Assessments should include noise impacts.

3. Spending Review update

3.1 Secretary gave a brief introduction to the tabled paper on a UK marine monitoring programme bid which had been prepared with the assistance of individuals drawn from the membership of Plenary and the GOOSAG. The paper had been written in preparation for the 2006 Spending Review.

3.2 John Roberts thought it was an interesting paper but stated that the financial constraints of the next Spending Review were going to be very tight. The emphasis would be on efficiency savings and changed priorities which implied that any bid would have to be reasonably realistic. He noted that the paper appeared to be focussed on the large scale and on ocean physics. Although this would provide important underpinning there were many specific observing activities that were required to meet OSPAR requirements that were not in the bid, e.g. eutrophication. These would add significantly to the cost of the bid or would need to be covered in a separate bid from Defra. A tension existed between short-term requirements to meet obligations in UK waters and longer-term international activities. However, others pointed out that short-term requirements were often at the departmental level whereas the long-term needed a cross-departmental approach. The problems with securing funds for Argo and Jason-2 are examples of the latter. This raised the question of whether Defra was the best department to front the bid – as had been suggested at a previous meeting. There is no agency which takes responsibility for these activities and therefore no mechanism for making such a bid.

3.3 Some concern was expressed that there might be too much emphasis on science rather than meeting government needs and identifying a credible delivery mechanism. It would be useful to highlight the high-level policy issues which the bid addressed, e.g. WSSD. The bid could then be seen as the UK contribution to the international effort on important global issues. Relating the bid to GEOSS was a critical part of this. The strategy document being prepared by Colin Summerhayes for GOOSAG would be useful in this regard. It was also suggested that there ought to be a clear benefit of showing that the proposed approach would lead to cost savings elsewhere.

3.4 It was agreed that the document could benefit from revision to take account of points made but it was noted that the Retreat would allow further consideration.

Action: Secretary to take forward in the light of further discussion at the Retreat

4. IACMST Retreat (Urchfont Manor 6-8 July)

4.1 Secretary summarised arrangements, including a provisional programme and an update on the confirmed attendance. Some invitees had failed to respond and would be contacted before offering their places to others.

Action: Secretariat

4.2 Key issues for discussion were: Spending Review bid; horizon scanning; *raison d'être* for IACMST and consequent effects on membership; implications of the Marine Bill and the EU Marine Strategy. It was agreed to invite John Roberts to give a short presentation on the latter. It would be important to ensure that the focus was not too inward-looking. Reference was made to a recent horizon scanning exercise in Defra which included marine science. Contact should be made with John Pinnegar (CEFAS) to obtain access to the material produced and possibly to contribute a short presentation.

Action: Secretary to contact CEFAS on horizon scanning material

4.3 Information provided to participants ahead of the Retreat should include background material on IACMST, the Spending Review bid and the Chairman's vision for the future of IACMST. Peter Liss, Mike Cowling and David Palmer agreed to assist Secretary in further planning of the agreed sessions.

5. Action Group Chairs

GOOSAG

5.1 Ian Townend reported on the group's meeting of 5 May. There was some concern that NCOF lacked wider engagement and this was being discussed with the Met Office. The report by Chris Reid and John Portmann on an integrated view of monitoring across sectors was available in draft form and good progress had been made by Colin Summerhayes on the UK GOOS Strategy. It included a very good guide explaining GOOS and GEOSS. His PowerPoint presentation would be circulated to members of IACMST. The next GOOSAG meeting in November would be held in conjunction with an open meeting on indicators for the marine processes and climate sector.

MEDAG.

5.2 Mike Cowling reported that the previous meeting had been in December; the next was scheduled for July. A key issue was how MEDAG, UKMIC and MDIP fitted together. The importance of having a project manager who could ensure progress on a day to day basis was emphasised. The real engine of the partnership was its sub-groups and these were now beginning to develop momentum.

6. Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership (MCCIP)

6.1 Beth Greenaway (Defra Marine & Waterways Division) had been asked to give a presentation on plans for the MCCIP. Much of the presentation (attached to these minutes) gave the wider

context for this initiative including: the main drivers; the recent State of the Seas report "Charting Progress", produced in response to the Marine Stewardship report; and the development of plans for monitoring and handling data issues.

6.2 Among the actions which have resulted were: the need to develop ecosystem indicators, the development of a marine monitoring strategy for the UK, and the formation of MDIP and MCCIP. The Marine Monitoring Coordination Group would be considering a draft strategy at its July meeting. Formation of the MCCIP was intended to provide a UK-wide coordinating framework for the transfer of high-quality, marine climate change impact evidence to policy advisers and decision makers. It would act as a focal point to investigate, inform, advise and encourage action, in order to adapt to the challenges and opportunities presented by the impacts of climate change in the marine environment.

6.3 Work had been progressing since April. The timescale was short as inputs were required by September to feed into Defra in time for submission for the 2006 Spending Review. One of the issues was the link to IACMST. The flow of data from measurement to end user assessment had to be considered and both MEDAG (as part of the MDIP process) and GOOSAG were relevant. For MCCIP it was assumed that the required data existed and the emphasis was on the interpretation of those data for policy makers. An expert advisory group was to be set up, there would be stakeholder involvement, and resources would be needed for coordination. Again, there was a possible role for IACMST and its action groups

6.4 John Lock noted that MCCIP was not restricted to Defra but was intended to be UK-wide. How were international aspects to be handled? Beth Greenaway agreed this was important and drew attention to the international links and responsibilities associated with MEDAG. Mike Cowling expressed the view that Project Board members needed to be at high level. He was also anxious to emphasise that the picture which had been given of the relationship of MDIP to MEDAG was not what had been agreed by MDIP at its 7th April meeting Ian Townend also pointed out that GOOS was much more than Marine Processes and Climate though this was the particular contribution that GOOSAG had made to State of the Seas. Chairman proposed that we should postpone discussion to the Retreat and this was agreed.

7. AoB

7.1 In the absence of any further business the Chairman formally closed the meeting. The secretary drew members' attention to the date of the September meeting which had been changed to Tuesday 13th September and asked that they make any necessary correction in their diaries.

Action List

Action No.	Action	Agenda	Action Required by
1	Revisit proposed membership of MEDAG Review Group	1	David Palmer
2	Circulate correspondence on INSPIRE between Chairman and Sir David King	1	Chair/Secretary
3	Further development of Spending Review bid following consideration at Retreat	3	Secretary
4	Chase up potential retreat participants who had failed to respond/invite replacements	4	Secretariat
5	Contact CEFAS re horizon scanning	4	Secretary