

Inter-Agency Committee on Marine Science and Technology

Minutes

Forty-first Plenary Meeting held on Tuesday 13th September 2005 at 10.30 am MRC, Park Crescent, London.

Present: Prof Howard Dalton, Defra (Chair) Dr John Lock, Defra Dr Chris Gordon, Met Office Dr Phil Newton, NERC Mr David Palmer, Environment Agency Dr Steven Spall, MOD	Secretariat: Mr Trevor Guymer
Independent Members: Prof Peter Liss Mr Ian Townend	Apologies: Mr Tim Bostock, DfID Dr Phil Burnell, EPSRC Ms Theresa Crossley, DfT Dr Walter Crozier, AFESD Dr Robin Cook, Scottish Executive FRS Dr Martin Fiddler, FCO Mr David Foskett, DTI Dr Nigel Heriz-Smith, OST

Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone and thanked the Secretariat for a very successful Retreat held at Urchfont Manor in July. He also noted that Mike Cowling had stepped down from his position as an independent member following his change of employment. He expressed his appreciation for the considerable contribution he had made bringing a broad-ranging and challenging perspective, and asked that the Secretary convey the Committee's thanks and good wishes. **(Action 1: Secretary to write to Mike Cowling)**

Minutes of the 40th Meeting on 24th May 2005

The minutes were approved subject to amending Item 1.5 to note that although Defra was a member of the ERANet on Pollution it was not coordinating it.

1. Review of Actions

INSPIRE

1.1 The Chair reported that a letter had been drafted for Sir David King to send to the EC expressing concern about the treatment of marine issues and the lack of consultation with IACMST and similar bodies. Replies had been received from the DGs of both Environment and Research stating they would be happy to receive the marine community's views and welcoming any input IACMST was able to make.

Spending Review

1.2 The Chair had been seeking advice within Defra. One danger was that such a bid would, by its nature, be seen as not big or exciting enough. It was suggested that, in parallel, the various departments should engage in discussion on how they could fund longer; OST should also be involved.

1.3 An update was given of two of the component activities cited in the bid. Funding for the present phase of the UK Argo programme (up to March 2006) was less than expected mainly due to a shortfall in the Defra contribution. NERC's contribution in kind was continuing as planned until March 2007. Future funding for UK Argo remained uncertain. The recent Atlantic hurricane season further emphasised the need for improved information on ocean heat storage, which Argo could provide. A bid to continue monitoring of the Atlantic Conveyor was likely to be included in a follow-on proposal to NERC's RAPID programme.

1.4 It was agreed that IACMST should still pursue its strategic view. Large amounts of senior managers' time were being used to secure small amounts of money and there were surely significant efficiency gains to be made by such an approach. Chair would raise the issue with Sir David King.

Action 2: Chairman to raise issue of funding for sustained observations with CSA.

All other actions had been completed.

Matters arising

Marine bioresources

1.5 Phil Newton reported that NERC Centres were developing programmes in association with DARD and FRS. It was agreed that a presentation should be requested for the January Plenary.

Action 3: Secretary and Phil Newton to explore potential presentation on marine bioresources for January meeting.

2. Underwater Sound and Marine Life

2.1 Peter Liss, chair of the WG, gave a presentation on the report, draft copies of which had been circulated to the committee. He focused on the background and recommendation of the group. There was strong interest from scientists, policy makers and the international community as well as the general public. Different groups had been pulling in different directions.

2.2 Having briefly described the background to the setting up of the Working Group and its Terms of Reference, Peter Liss then emphasised that its purpose had not been to try to synthesize available knowledge but to look at the issue from a cross-sectoral perspective. The report had been reviewed and agreed by all WG members.

2.3 Nine recommendations had been produced and were briefly summarised. In order to expedite progress a priority had been assigned to each of these based on a combination of importance/feasibility/timeliness. Peter Liss emphasised that this was his ordering – the WG had not been consulted. He proposed that IACMST should authorise publication of the report. This did not commit IACMST to endorsing all the conclusions. He also suggested that the Committee should accept and endorse the three Priority 1 recommendations and decide how they should be implemented. The other recommendations could be considered further at the January Plenary.

2.4 The Chair asked for comments, having welcomed the way the group had achieved its conclusions. It was agreed that the report should be published with a suitable caveat on IACMST endorsement. The earliest practicable date was December but this depended on the time taken to arrange a contract for design and printing. Publication should be accompanied by a press release with Recommendations 1 and 9 acting as a focus. In many ways, Rec 8 was a key through which the others could be explored. Media enquiries should be routed through the IACMST Office in conjunction with departmental representatives. These would need to be briefed. It was also agreed that a 1-2 day meeting on the subject should be held in the Spring. A small planning group should take this forward and departments should be prepared to put money and effort into helping organise the meeting.

Action 4: Arrange for publication as a report as soon as practicable (Secretary).

Action 5: Set up small planning group to organise meeting (Secretary, Peter Liss)

3. Retreat - Urchfont Manor

3.1 Secretary had circulated a draft report of the meeting to participants; only minor changes had been received. IACMST was invited to discuss the conclusions and issues raised under the headings: horizon scanning; status / membership; SR bid (already covered under ‘actions’); short life working groups

Status/membership

3.2 Chair questioned the lack of regular attendance by some departments. Reasons put forward included positioning of departments with respect to the Marine Bill and policy issues in general. IACMST needed to do more in bridging the gap between research and policy to secure the interest of those engaged in the latter.

3.3 It was also suggested that industry representatives and NGOs be invited. Chair said he could write to Friends of the Earth etc to see if we could get representatives. It was not clear who should be invited from Industry. CBI was one possibility. A new independent member had to be appointed. Names were suggested but it was agreed that Secretary should seek the views of all departmental representatives.

Action 6: Secretary to write to departments regarding suggestions for independent member role.

Horizon scanning

3.4 Members were asked to rank the identified topics personally and from the perspectives of their own departments. Peter Liss drew attention to the hazards and risk assessment category and asked whether, in the light of the two recent disasters, whether there was actually the political will to do something.

3.5 It was pointed out that horizon scanning was an issue for ERFF as well and it would be useful to draw in their advice. In particular, the Underwater Sound WG report should be passed to John Holmes.

Action 7: Departments to rank horizon scanning priorities identified at Retreat

4 Action Group Chairs

GOOS AG (Ian Townend)

4.1 A study on integrating marine monitoring requirements by Chris Reid and John Portmann would be finalised in the next two months. Another report for GOOSAG, the UK GOOS Strategic Plan by Colin Summerhayes, was also near completion.

4.2 The Marine Monitoring Coordination Group whose membership includes representatives of four sectors including GOOS was formed to integrate marine monitoring in the UK. Through it, Defra is seeking to broaden the activity to secure departmental buy-in within the context of the forthcoming Marine Bill. A draft Marine Monitoring Strategy is being reviewed by members and IT, JP and TG submitted an alternative view. There was a one-off opportunity to change things for the better.

4.3 The next meeting of GOOSAG in November would be held in conjunction with an opening meeting on Indicators. Tom Malone, Director of the US Oceans Office and cochair of the COOP Panel, would be giving a keynote talk. Presentations would also include one by the PML/POL team on their work on indicators which had been carried out under contract to GOOSAG.

MEDAG/MDIP

4.4 Chair reported on a meeting of the joint Sponsors Board held on 2nd August at which agreement had been reached on funding for MDIP for an initial 2-year period, on the arrangements for recruiting the MDIP Project Manager without unduly affecting MEDAG. It was agreed to circulate a cleaned-up version of the MDIP structure diagram. Minutes of the meeting were also requested.

Action 8: Secretary to circulate MDIP structure diagram and obtain minutes of meeting.

5 Review of MEDAG

5.1 The chairman of the review panel, David Palmer, had attended the MEDAG meeting held in July. At that stage it was clear that there were large divergences in viewpoint and that thinking on MDIP was still in a state of transition. With the agreement of the IACMST Chair he had postponed starting the review until agreements had been reached. However, it was still planned that the review would be completed by the next Plenary.

5.2 The membership of the panel had been determined taking account of previous remarks that it should include several non-MEDAG members to provide a more objective assessment. Invitations had been extended but confirmation was still awaited in one or two cases. (Post-meeting update: the confirmed review panel membership is David Palmer (Chair), Jerzy Graff, Colin Grant, Trevor Guymmer, Peter Liss, Chris Reid, and Graham Shimmiel.) It was hoped that the first meeting could be arranged for October. Responding to a question, David Palmer indicated that the review would include the perception of MEDAG by outsiders.

6 AoB

6.1 Ian Townend informed the meeting that ABP Mer is a contractor on a study commissioned by Defra researching options for a Marine Spatial Planning Pilot; a workshop was planned for 29th September in London.

6.2 Peter Liss was organising a 1-day meeting on hazards and predictability, including hurricanes, tsunamis and harmful algal blooms.

Date of next meeting

6.3 The next Plenary was scheduled for Wednesday 25th January 2006 (subsequently changed to **30th January starting at 1300**) and the following meeting will be on **18th May**.

**IACMST 41st Plenary Meeting
Tuesday, 13th September 2005**

Action List

Action No	Action	Agenda	Action Required by
1	Thank Mike Cowling for his work as an independent member	Welcome	Secretary
		1	Chairman
2	Raise issue of funding for sustained observations	1	Phil Newton, Secretary
3	Explore possible marine bioresources presentation at January plenary	2	Secretary
4	Arrange publication of underwater sound WG report as soon as practicable	2	Secretary, Peter Liss
5	Set up small planning group for potential meeting on sound and marine life	3	Secretary
6	Invite departments to suggest suitable individuals for role of IACMST independent	3	Secretary to remind members
7	Departments to rank horizon scanning priorities identified at Retreat	4	Secretary
8	Circulate MDIP structure diagram and obtain report of 2 nd August meeting		