

Inter-Agency Committee on Marine Science and Technology

Confirmed Minutes

Forty-third Plenary Meeting held on Thursday 18 May 2006 from 10.30 at Defra, Nobel House. London.

<p>Present: Prof Howard Dalton, Defra (Chair) Dr Liz Bentley, MOD (RAO) Dr David Cotton, MDIP Dr Chris Gordon, Met Office Dr John Lock, Defra Dr Phil Newton, NERC Mr Kevin O'Carroll, DTI Mr David Palmer, Environment Agency Dr John Portmann, GOOSAG Chair Dr Lesley Rickards, BODC Dr Matt Service, DARDNI Dr Mike Waldoock, CEFAS Dr Mike Webb, NERC</p> <p>Independent Members: Professor Peter Liss Professor Graham Shimmield Mr Ian Townend</p> <p>Secretariat: Mr Trevor Guymer</p>	<p>Apologies: Dr Robin Cook, FRS Ms Theresa Crossley, DfT Dr Walter Crozier, DARDNI Dr Michael Depledge, Environment Agency Mr David Foskett, DTI Dr Nigel Heriz-Smith OST Mr Neil MacPherson, DfID Dr Bev Mackenzie, IMarEST Dr John Mitchell, Met Office Dr Stephen Malcolm, CEFAS Lt Cdr. Mark Reed, MOD (DIJE) Mr Andrew Tate, FCO Vacant, EPSRC</p>
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Welcome

The Chairman welcomed CEFAS as a new member of IACMST, Mike Webb who had replaced Phil Newton as the NERC representative, Graham Shimmield who had accepted the invitation to become an independent member, and David Cotton who was presenting Item 3. Chairman also took the opportunity to update members on recent ministerial changes in Defra.

1. Forty-second Plenary Meeting held on 30 January 2006

The minutes were approved.

Review of Actions

1.1 All actions had been completed or would be dealt with under other agenda items.

Matters arising

Horizon scanning
1.2 All departments had replied, except for DfT, and a summary table had been circulated prior to the meeting showing that the top three are:

- (i) economics of environmental measurements;
 - (ii) adaptation as result of climate change (including adaptation of policy):
 - (iii) data sharing & data archiving.
- 1.3 Regarding (i) Ian Townend noted that work commissioned by GOOSAG and published by IACMST had produced a methodology for quantifying economic benefits; what was needed was to promote its availability and encourage its application. It was suggested that the results of the horizon scanning exercise be linked with a survey conducted by the research sub-group of GECC which had been focused on identifying gaps in research. It was also pointed out that true horizon scanning involved looking more than 10 years hence and the IACMST exercise had not really achieved this. Defra's own horizon scanning report was about to be published and it would be useful both to circulate the report and to have a presentation at the next meeting.

Action 1: Secretariat to obtain and circulate Defra horizon scanning report when available. Chairman to arrange for presentation from Project Team at September Plenary.

- 1.4 It was also noted that quantifying uncertainty & risk scored highly and it was agreed this was an interesting topic combining not only uncertainties arising from the data themselves but from the complexities of the science. In addition, there was a big issue of how to communicate uncertainty and risk to decision makers, as exemplified in a recent study of the Thames estuary. It was suggested that this might be the subject of the next IACMST working group but a decision was deferred as there was a possibility that Item 5 might also result in recommendations for setting up a WG.

MEDAG review

- 1.5 In accepting the report of the Review Panel, IACMST had come to the view that a separate joint MEDAG/MDIP sponsor board was not required. This was fed back to meetings of MEDAG and MDIP on 1 March. Since then some MDIP sponsors who are not members of Plenary have expressed some concern over lack of influence on the programme. After discussion here and later under Item 4 it was concluded that the Sponsors Board could serve a useful function and therefore a meeting would be organised in conjunction with September Plenary.

Action 2: David Cotton and IACMST Secretariat to arrange meeting of MDIP Sponsors Board on same day as September Plenary.

2. UNDERWATER SOUND AND MARINE LIFE

- 2.1 Secretary reported on developments since the January Plenary. The report was published on 13 February accompanied by a press release. Several hundred hard copies and many electronic copies have been circulated, the largest number being at OI2006 where one of the WG members gave a talk highlighting the recommendations of the report. There had been several media opportunities, including radio interviews by Peter Liss and Secretary and newspaper reports. Germany, Netherlands, USA and the EC had requested copies so that they could learn from the UK approach. Copies have also been sent to the ESF Marine Board and MarinERA seeking their views on how to take forward the European dimension of the recommendations; responses are awaited.
- 2.2 With regard to the actions arising at the previous meeting a small team consisting of Peter Liss, Roland Rogers and Secretary has been set up to follow up the report's recommendations. One of its activities has been to plan a joint meeting on the topic with IMarEST. This is scheduled for 9 October at the City Conference Centre, London and will provide a further opportunity to promote awareness and will also be used to launch the Forum. A letter from Chairman and Peter Liss was sent on 16 February to member departments of IACMST requesting their responses to the recommendations and who they wished to represent their interests at the Forum. Few replies had been received to date. Kevin O'Carroll requested that the letter to DTI also be copied to him.

Action 3: Secretary to chase responses and to send copy of letter to Kevin O'Carroll.

3. PROGRESS WITH MDIP

- 3.1 The MDIP Project Manager, David Cotton, had been asked to give a presentation on the status and plans. After reminding members of the main objectives he outlined the work programme for the first year of the two-year initial phase, emphasizing that the focus was not on technical solutions but on identifying sources of data, protocols for sharing and costs involved. As a result it would be possible to establish an authoritative resource base. The programme had been broken into manageable tasks undertaken by the three working groups. Initially, work had been done with three Data Archive Centres (DACs) which met the agreed criteria; it was now timely to include other DACs such as BGS. The MDIP website (accessed through www.oceannet.org) had just been launched.
- 3.2 The website would not give independent access to data but would allow people to find out what was available and its conformity to agreed standards. Experience with MAGIC had shown this was the most costly aspect. Referring to discussions on data management in Scotland, Graham Shimmiel pointed out the tension

between thematic and regional approaches. The presentation showed a traffic light table indicating which parts of the data system were least developed. The aim of MDIP was to turn all the entries green. Finally, the relationship of MDIP to UKMMAS, MAPC and MARG was presented and discussed. It was agreed that the Chairman of the Project Board should be invited to the Sponsors Board.

4. IACMST RESPONSE TO MARINE BILL CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Peter Liss introduced the item, basing his remarks on preliminary considerations by the independent members. Although Departments will make individual responses it seems appropriate for IACMST to comment on cross-departmental issues. Most of these revolved around the possible creation of a Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and included: concerns over where the underpinning science was to come from, how the necessary long-term observations were to be funded, the relationship between an MMO and components of IACMST, the need for the Bill to pick up relevant recommendations from the Underwater Sound report, the basis of ecosystem objectives, and (possibly) comments on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).
- 4.2 In the resulting discussion a number of points about the purpose of MPAs were raised. It was agreed that it would be valuable for IACMST to make comments in its response, highlighting general confusion over the issue and the tensions between different sectors. There was felt to be insufficient information to arrive at a sensible conclusion and this view needed to be fed into the process. There was a danger that basing policy on insufficient data might would fail to deliver what was best for the environment. It was also far from clear what resources would be needed for an MMO to function effectively.
- 4.3 It was decided that the points outlined by Peter Liss should be circulated as a basis for the IACMST response. All members were invited to contribute to the development of the response which, in order to meet the deadline of 23 June, would be coordinated by the Secretary via email exchange.

Action 4: Secretary to circulate key points as basis for IACMST response to Marine Bill consultation and collate inputs via email to ensure submission by 23 June.

5. MARINE BIO-RESOURCES

- 5.1 John Lock spoke to this item, referring to a paper which had been circulated prior to the meeting and to the recently completed scoping study commissioned by Defra, NERC, SEERAD and DARDNI following meetings held in the wake of the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit's report 'Net Benefits'. Marine bioresources had been identified as a topic in the 'Oceans 2025' coordinated proposal for core

funding, developed by the NERC marine centres. It was now in peer review. A need for extra funding had been identified for a collaborative programme focused on key projects.

- 5.2 Mike Webb stated that the outcome of 'Oceans 2025' would be known by the end of the year. 50 Full Time Equivalent posts for marine bioresources were included in the five-year bid. However, a large element of the funding may have to come from NERC's responsive mode. On a wider front NERC was determining its future strategic priorities and there was an opportunity for IACMST to provide inputs to this process.
- 5.3 Much of the discussion then focused on what else needed to be done, particularly making better use of existing information and translating it into what is needed for decision making. Mention was made of John Holmes who was on a five year secondment from the EA to Oxford University to consider science-into-policy issues. It would be useful to have a presentation at the September Plenary by him on marine aspects of this issue, perhaps with an MPA angle. John Lock also referred to three desk studies on MPAs which were available.

Action 5: Chairman to invite John Holmes to give a presentation on marine aspects of science into policy at September Plenary.

Action 6: John Lock to send desk studies on MPAs to IACMST Office for distribution to members.

6. GOOSAG ISSUES

- 6.1 The Chairman of GOOSAG, Ian Townend, began by highlighting achievements by the Group since January. A report reviewing marine monitoring in the UK had now been placed on the GOOSAG website, together with the UK GOOS Strategic Plan. A 20-page summary of the latter was in production and this would be published as an IACMST report. Another report, on Indicators, was about to be placed on the website. The UK Argo programme was producing a report on its activities since its inception in 2000. It would highlight the benefits to date. A glossy version was also to be published by the Met Office, deadline 1 September. The prioritisation activity reported in January was still in progress. Referring to the National Centre for Ocean Forecasting (NCOF), he noted there had been something of a *volte face* over the UK strategy on global ocean modelling and this was leading to some confusion. He was due to meet with Mike Bell, the head of NCOF, soon to clarify matters.
- 6.2 The report then switched to the developing UK Marine Monitoring and Assessment Strategy (UKMMAS) and its relationship to GOOSAG. Initially, there had been considerable concerns about the scope of UKMMAS, particularly in relation to the open ocean and to international commitments. This had been

debated at several recent meetings and it had been left to the Marine Assessment Policy Committee to clarify the scope at its meeting on 11 May. Secretary, who had represented IACMST at the meeting, outlined the main conclusions: UKMMAS will embrace all UK marine monitoring interests not just those in UK waters. Further changes to the ToRs will be made to reflect the importance of international drivers. MARG will look again at the structure of its Tier 3 groups, taking account of GOOSAG's view that a fourth group focused on dynamics, particularly of the open ocean, might be needed. In principle, if the revised scope and structure incorporated GOOS requirements and if these were delivered successfully then the justification for a separate GOOSAG would disappear. Chairman of MAPC will write to Howard Dalton to initiate a dialogue. Other points covered were costings of present monitoring activities, becoming more proactive with respect to policy development, and coordination of bids to the Comprehensive Spending Review.

- 6.3 Ian Townend was then asked what else needed to be done to follow up the GOOSAG report on the economics of sustained marine measurements. In his view the priority was how to determine which new long-term monitoring could be started and which could be stopped. It was suggested that the 'Boston Analysis' within Defra might be relevant. It was also suggested by Chris Gordon that it might be useful to look at planning the longer-term balance of the ocean observing system taking note what had happened in meteorology with satellites versus *in situ* measurements. IN response, Ian Townend said he was negotiating with NCOF for a study to address impact of different observing system components. However, GOOSAG would only be able to afford a scoping study.

7. MEDAG ISSUES

- 7.1 Peter Liss briefly reported that the two actions from last meeting had been dealt with. DARD cruises prior to 2000 are in the MEDAG cruise inventory; action is being taken to obtain those from 2000 onwards. Information is now available showing how much resource is allocated to each activity within MEDAG, subdivided according to whether it funded by NERC or the other sponsors. It is not possible to assess usage of data by the sponsors accurately. However, this will be one of the topics discussed in a series of visits to the relevant organisations. The main achievements of the Group since January were: the imminent release of the wave data inventory, increased resources to maintain the UK cruise inventory, near completion of the photographs and videos workshop report and further development of the OceanNET website including the new MDIP pages and revamping of the GOOSAG pages.
- 7.2 In response to a query raised at the previous meeting, Peter Liss is to continue as chairman of MEDAG, in addition to that of MDIP. This joint chairmanship offers distinct advantages as does arranging meetings of the two groups at the same

venue on the same day. The next meeting of MEDAG (and MDIP) is on 20 June, the day after the joint MED/MDIP Forum.

8. AOB

- 8.1 Kevin O'Carroll reported that the Oil and Gas producers' Forum is starting a major study on noise in the sea, costing approx. £20M.
- 8.2 John Lock wished to congratulate those involved in mounting the IACMST display stand at OI2006 and the associated lunchtime event.
- 8.3 In response to an enquiry from Ian Townend as to whether there were any developments to report on UK involvement in developing the Indian Ocean tsunami warning system, Secretary reported that there were not.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 9.1 The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 19 September 2006.

IACMST Forty-Third Plenary Meeting

Action List

Action No.	Action	Agenda Item	Action by
1	Obtain and circulate Defra horizon scanning report when available. Arrange for presentation from Project Team at September Plenary.	1	Secretariat Chair
2	Arrange meeting of MDIP Sponsors Board on same day as September Plenary.		David Cotton, Secretariat
3	Underwater Sound and Marine Life Forum and Report. Chase responses re recommendations and representation on Forum and send copy of DTI letter to Kevin O'Carroll.	2	Secretariat
4	Circulate key points as basis for IACMST response to Marine Bill consultation and collate inputs via email to ensure submission by 23 June.	4	Secretariat
5	Invitation to John Holmes to give a presentation on marine aspects of science into policy at September Plenary.	5	Chair
6	Send desk studies on MPAs to IACMST Office for distribution to members.	5	John Lock