

## Inter-Agency Committee on Marine Science and Technology

### Confirmed Minutes

**Forty-ninth Plenary Meeting held on Thursday 15 May 2008 from 10.30 at Defra, Nobel House, London.**

<p><b>Present:</b> Mike Bell (Met Office) Paul Canham (UKHO) Robin Cook (FRS) Joe Horwood (Cefas) Wendy Kennedy (BERR) John Lock (Defra) Bev MacKenzie (IMarEST) Mike Webb (NERC) Steve Wilkinson (JNCC) Andrew Wither (EA)</p> <p><b>Independent Members:</b> Peter Liss Graham Shimmield Ian Townend</p> <p><b>Secretariat:</b> Trevor Guymer</p>	<p><b>Apologies:</b> Nick Grout (DIUS) Theresa Crossley (DfT) Ed Hill (Oceans 2025) Nick Holden (EA) Neil MacPherson (DfID) Stephen Malcolm (Cefas) Kevin O'Carroll (BERR) Havard Prosser (Welsh Assembly Government) Mark Reed (MOD) Carolyn Reeve (DIUS) Matt Service (AFBINI) Andrew Tate (FCO) Malcolm Vincent (JNCC)</p>
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#### **Welcome and apologies**

Chairman welcomed Wendy Kennedy representing BERR, Joe Horwood representing Cefas and Steve Wilkinson representing JNCC. Apologies were as noted above.

#### **1.0 Forty-eighth Plenary Meeting held on 31 January 2008**

**1.1** The minutes were approved for display on the IACMST website.

#### **1.2 Review of Actions**

All items had been completed with the exception of Action 3 regarding clarification of the remit of UKMMAS. Progress would be reported under Item 2.2. In confirming that he had alerted MMO officials on the need to make full use of MEDIN, John Lock also reported that the plan was for the MMO to be formed in 2010 and that access to data would be important for it to fulfill its functions.

#### **1.3 Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising additional to the agenda.

## **2.0 Brief Updates**

### **2.1 Marine Environmental Data and Information Network (MEDIN)**

Peter Liss reported that the Marine Environmental Data Action Group (MEDAG) and the Marine Data Information Partnership (MDIP) had merged to form the Marine Environmental Data and Information Network (MEDIN). The focus of activities remained to improve access to and management of UK marine environmental data and information for the benefit of the whole marine community. Until arrangements for the successor body were in place, MEDIN would continue to report to IACMST. The top level governing body is the sponsors' board, responsible for approving the work programme. An executive team will be responsible for carrying out the work programme. It will comprise the current 'core' MEDIN staff (Lesley Rickards, David Cotton, Mark Charlesworth and Gaynor Evans), plus other expert representatives drawn from sponsors and partners. Although confirmation of exact amounts was still awaited in some cases, the present position with sponsorship was that offers amounted to £713K per year over a three year period. Thus the £690K target appeared to have been met. NERC will continue to provide administrative support and office support for MEDIN staff located at the British Oceanographic Data Centre in Liverpool.

A new work programme had been developed in consultation with the MDIP Working Group chairs that consisted of seven work streams: Network of Marine Data Archive Centres; Standards for Data and Metadata, Guidelines and Tools; Web Portal, Products and Services; International Awareness, Coordination and Data Delivery to Global Databases; Specific Resource Development and Support; Communications and Outreach; and Core Management, Coordination and Planning. A sponsorship agreement had been drafted and would be circulated within a few days. David Cotton will follow up to establish the necessary arrangements with each sponsor. The outline work programme would be finalised shortly, and it was planned to hold a sponsors' meeting, followed by an open partners' meeting, in the next two months.

### **2.2 UK Marine Monitoring & Assessment Strategy**

Secretary reported that the recommendation of the *ad hoc* group to establish a fourth evidence group, DSEG, was considered at the HBDSEG meeting of 6 February and endorsed. HBDSEG were keen to ensure that the ecosystem approach included better integration across all components and in particular oceanography, which plays an important role in ecosystem structure and function. Integration would be maintained across all Evidence Groups through mini-MARG, which all Evidence Group Chairs attend. They requested that four items be developed to ensure clarity of roles and consistency in work programmes across the Evidence Groups:

- Develop clear Terms of Reference
- Formulate integration between HBDSEG, DSEG and wider UKMMAS
- Clarify GMES interactions

- Clarify appropriate membership.  
Progress on this was reported back to the meeting of HBDSEG meeting on 7 May. It was expected that MAPC would consider this matter at their meeting in July when they would also confirm the scope of the UKMMAS programme. In discussion, it was noted that extra funding needed to deliver the wider monitoring remained an issue; indeed, it had been highlighted again at the recent Select Committee session on the Government's response to 'Investigating the Oceans'. Chairman concluded the item, noting that this was an issue that would need constant attention by MSCC.

### **2.3 Underwater Sound Forum**

Peter Liss as Chairman of the Forum reported that the number of members continued to grow and that Roland Rogers would be providing additional assistance to the Secretariat. Encouraging progress had been made in collecting information from a number of organisations on tools, technologies and databases (one of the recommendations of the original IACMST working group on underwater sound). Small teams within the Forum have taken on responsibility for progressing several other recommendations over the next few months. Scientific and technical reports relevant to the work of the Forum have been collated and made available to members via the OceanNet web site. As part of the consultation on the Draft Marine Bill Forum members wished to comment on a reference to underwater sound in the Bill where greater clarity of requirements could be achieved by improved wording. It emerged that IACMST also wished to question whether instrument deployment for scientific research would require a license under the provisions of the Bill. It was therefore agreed that the two points would be raised together. As the Forum needs to continue for another few meetings it was noted that arrangements for transferring responsibility to MSCC would have to be made.

**Action: Secretariat to draft response to Draft Marine Bill consultation and circulate for approval**

### **2.4 International Sub-Committee**

The minutes of the meeting of 31 March had been circulated. One item was brought to the meeting's attention by Secretary who also chairs this sub-committee as the UK point of contact with IOC. With the impending transition from IACMST to MSCC and in particular the suggestion that it would have its own international working group, opportunity had been taken to review arrangements. It was proposed that the function of the IACMST international sub-committee should be split in two. The MSCC working group could be a forum for all international marine issues; the present committee tended to focus on IOC but the new arrangement would allow inclusion in its membership of all the UK representatives to the marine-related intergovernmental bodies and hence a wider debate that would help to flag important issues and ensure consistency of UK viewpoints. The other body would be the official national committee for IOC and would take its place within the UK National Commission to UNESCO. This

would formalize what already exists – the chairman of the present sub-committee is a member of the National Commission’s Natural Science Committee. It would be appropriate for the chairman of the national IOC committee to be a member of the MSCC international working group.

There was broad support for this concept and it would be for MSCC to consider whether and how they wished to develop this broader view.

**Action: Secretariat to ensure MSCC are made aware of the idea for a broad-based international working group in addition to a national IOC committee**

### **3.0 Marine Science Coordination Committee (MSCC)**

**3.1** This, the major item on the agenda, provided a further opportunity for members to comment on plans for the new Committee which was to replace IACMST. Since the previous Plenary, the Select Committee had held an off-the-record session with invited members of the marine community to obtain reactions to the Government response to ‘Investigating the Oceans’ and had then decided to hold a further public evidence session on 22 April with the Secretary of State for Defra and Defra’s Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA). Plenary had been provided with transcripts of the session and the latest version (V5) of the paper produced by the MSCC planning group chaired by John Lock. In introducing the item Chairman noted that the CSA appeared to be unsighted on much of the work being done by the community on marine monitoring.

**3.2** John Lock introduced the planning group’s paper noting that the group had met twice. The Secretary of State had been very impressed by the work done and had made Version 4 of the document available to the Select Committee. It was intended that the final version of the paper would form the basis of a Defra paper to go to partners. The first formal meeting of MSCC (intended for July) would provide an opportunity for departments to feed back comments. Comments by IACMST would be taken into account in a meeting involving departmental representatives to be held later in the day. The various sections of the Planning Group paper, including the questions posed within the text, were then discussed in some detail; only the main issues are highlighted below.

#### **(a) Terms of Reference**

The way these were worded was important and there should be scope to revisit them in the light of the emerging Strategy. John Lock reported Defra’s view that the bullet points needed to be condensed to two high level objectives:

- (i) developing a strategy to help deliver the evidence required by UK to meet its ‘marine objectives’ and
- (ii) to improve marine science coordination through developing a plan that identified present weaknesses and how to remedy them.

In turn, this raised questions over whether sufficient attention was being paid to funding long-term observations (a key test for whether MSCC was able to deliver), to industry’s perspectives, with some concern over how technology was

defined, to data and information management, and how far MSCC would focus on matters that lay outside UK statutory obligations, including international issues.

**Action: IMarEST (Bev MacKenzie) to provide definition of technology appropriate to the MSCC context for inclusion in an annex to the Planning Paper**

**(b) Structure and Membership**

This was hierarchical and consisted of the main MSCC, a Support Group (SG) and various, as yet undefined, working groups. John Lock stated that in Defra's view this structure was too complex; their preference was to replace the SG with the Secretariat playing a more central role, including prime responsibility for the strategy development, drawing on individual expertise at present in the SG as necessary. Robin Cook said that Scottish Government agreed it was too complex. He questioned the basis on which some organisations were members of MSCC and others were not, suggesting that a determining factor should be the tasks that MSCC was expected to perform. Peter Liss doubted whether a rotating chairmanship would work in practice. It was suggested by the Chair that if the SG were to be abolished that MSCC itself could be enlarged. This would enable agencies that received, rather than funded, marine science to be accommodated. Another possibility was for agencies to form one of the working groups. Other suggestions were that in addition to its reporting role CSAC could be more involved by having a representative on MSCC and that there could be an independent chairman.

**(c) Stakeholder involvement**

Attention focused on the relationship between MSCC and MAPC. Although the paper contained two options, the Defra view was that the status quo should be allowed for a year to allow MAPC to settle. It was noted that the MMO might become a member of MSCC once it was established in 2010, dependent on the governance arrangements in place. It was suggested that consideration should also be given to the Scottish MMO's position with respect to MSCC. The position of existing agencies earmarked for membership of the SG would also need to be reviewed if there was to be no separate group.

**(d) Secretariat**

John Lock indicated the intention for this to be larger and better resourced than as described in Version 5 of the planning paper, assuming it incorporated the tasks of the SG. In response to questions, he said it would not be a Defra-only operation, that the planning paper expressed the hope that the experience of the present IACMST Secretariat could be retained, and that the partner departments on MSCC would be expected to contribute to the extra resources required to run MSCC. Regardless of the decision over incorporating MAPC into MSCC some secretariat effort would need to be devoted to strengthening links.

**(e) Reporting arrangements**

An important distinction from IACMST was that the new committee would report directly to a ministerial committee and that there would be a ministerial champion for marine science as stated clearly by the Secretary of State. It had not been possible to consult beforehand with the devolved administrations so a caveat had been placed on the statement. Robin Cook confirmed that Scottish Government had concerns on this aspect and would have a preference for a co-chair arrangement.

**(f) Timetable and future arrangements**

John Lock reiterated the plans leading up to the first meeting proper of MSCC. This will consider issues such as membership, the development of the strategy and the way that existing IACMST-hosted activities are assimilated into the MSCC structure. It had previously been agreed that IACMST should continue until a smooth transfer of responsibilities could be achieved. Steve Wilkinson proposed that as the Terms of Reference were finalised decisions would need to be made on which IACMST activities would be transferred and arrangements put in place for those that were not included.

**Action: Secretary to produce paper on IACMST-hosted activities and why they needed to continue plus the role of independents**

**4.0 Any Other Business**

**4.1** As this was the last meeting of IACMST, thanks were expressed by the Secretary to members and to the independent members for their support, particularly to Ian Townend for taking over the chair at a difficult time. On behalf of members, Bev MacKenzie also thanked the Secretariat.

## IACMST Forty-ninth Plenary Meeting Action List

<b>Action No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Action by</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Secretariat to draft response to Draft Marine Bill consultation and circulate for approval</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>Secretariat</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Secretariat to ensure MSCC are made aware of the idea for a broad-based international working group in addition to a national IOC committee</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>Secretariat</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>IMarEST to provide definition of technology appropriate to the MSCC context for inclusion in an annex to the Planning Paper</b>	<b>3.2 (a)</b>	<b>IMarEST (Bev MacKenzie)</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Secretariat to produce paper on IACMST-hosted activities and why they needed to continue, plus the role of Independents</b>	<b>3.2 (f)</b>	<b>Secretariat</b>

### List of Abbreviations

<b>AFBINI</b>	<b>Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute, Northern Ireland</b>
<b>BERR</b>	<b>Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (Department of)</b>
<b>Cefas</b>	<b>Centre for Environment, Fisheries &amp; Aquaculture Science</b>
<b>CSAC</b>	<b>Chief Scientific Adviser's Committee</b>
<b>Defra</b>	<b>Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs</b>
<b>DfID</b>	<b>Department for International Development</b>
<b>DfT</b>	<b>Department for Transport</b>
<b>DIUS</b>	<b>Department for Innovations, Universities &amp; Skills</b>
<b>DSEG</b>	<b>Dynamic Seas Evidence Group</b>
<b>EA</b>	<b>Environment Agency</b>
<b>FCO</b>	<b>Foreign &amp; Commonwealth Office</b>
<b>FRS</b>	<b>Fisheries Research Services</b>
<b>GMES</b>	<b>Global Monitoring for Environment and Security</b>
<b>HBDSEG</b>	<b>Healthy &amp; Biologically Diverse Seas Evidence Group</b>
<b>IACMST</b>	<b>Inter-Agency Committee on Marine Science and Technology</b>
<b>IMarEST</b>	<b>Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology</b>
<b>IOC</b>	<b>Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission</b>
<b>JNCC</b>	<b>Joint Nature Conservation Committee</b>
<b>MAPC</b>	<b>Marine Assessment Policy Committee</b>
<b>MARG</b>	<b>Marine Assessment and Reporting Group</b>
<b>MDIP</b>	<b>Marine Data Information Partnership</b>
<b>MEDAG</b>	<b>Marine Environment Data Action Group</b>

<b>MEDIN</b>	<b>Marine Environmental Data and Information Network</b>
<b>MMO</b>	<b>Marine Management Organisation</b>
<b>MOD</b>	<b>Ministry of Defence</b>
<b>MSCC</b>	<b>Marine Science Coordination Committee</b>
<b>NERC</b>	<b>Natural Environment Research Council</b>
<b>UKHO</b>	<b>United Kingdom Hydrographic Office</b>
<b>UKMMAS</b>	<b>United Kingdom Marine Monitoring and Assessment Strategy</b>
<b>UNESCO</b>	<b>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</b>