

Summary of your responses to the draft NBN Strategy 2015-2020

Introduction

The following information summarises the 86 responses the Secretariat of the NBN received in relation to the draft NBN strategy 2015-2020 consultation in February 2015. Thank you for your time commenting on the draft Strategy, and for the many detailed responses. The suggestions will be used in the creation and implementation of a Strategic Action Plan that is now in preparation. The final version of the NBN Strategy 2015-2020 will be published in April, taking on board your suggested changes in relation to this document.

- 1. We asked you if you support the new vision that has been presented for the NBN?** We heard that the Network is strongly supportive of the new vision (45) and many (27) are broadly supportive. There were some suggested which we will review. These changes included making the position of NSS clearer (1), changing wildlife to biological or biodiversity (2) and ensuring consistency of the words biological and wildlife throughout the strategy. There were requests to clarify the use of the term NBN (4) and the implication of the word “openly” (5), as well as the position of LERCs in delivering the strategy. One response did not support the vision, and another supported the vision in theory, but not in practice.
- 2. We asked if you are clear of what the NBN is, and that you are part of it?** Overall we heard that people are clear what the NBN is, and that they are part of it (43), though while people feel clear on this, some do not necessarily feel part of the NBN (3). 24 respondents are unclear of what the NBN is, or do not feel part of it. There were concerns that it is not inclusive to individuals (2), there was confusion on the terminology (13) between NBN Trust, NBN and the NBN Gateway. In many cases we heard that it was unclear whether NBN means the central organisation/system, or the wider network. There were requests to clarify the difference between member and partner, and the role of LERCs (2) in the Network.
- 3. We asked if you feel you have been listened to following the engagement in 2014?** We heard that most people feel that they have been listened to (42) and have felt part of the Strategy consultation process. Seven respondents felt that they had been listened to to some extent, but there were still areas which needed more clarity (such as the role of LERCs and individuals in the Strategy). Six respondents did not feel that they had been listened to through the engagement process.
- 4. We asked you if you will commit to the principles of the NBN strategy and how you want to be involved in implementation?** We heard support for the principles (47) and also heard concerns. In some instances commitment was expressed as long as the following caveats are taken into account:
 - providing the principles do not undermine the sustainability of LERCs and partners (9),
 - providing there is more recognition of the importance of local recording (3),
 - as long as resources are available (2),
 - as long as the principles encompass ‘all biodiversity’
 - concern around the implication of ‘open data’

Some respondents would like more clarity on the principles before committing to them (4)

- 5. We asked if you support accelerated data flow through NBN systems?**

We heard that the NBN supports this aim, and many responses clarified that this is key to ensuring continued recorder motivation, as well as providing services to data users (40). However, this is only supported as long as data quality is not compromised as a result (22). As a means to speed up data flow, without compromising quality it has been suggested that unverified records are shared and flagged accordingly, in advance of being verified (and updated). We also heard that many network members rely on volunteers for data management, and this resource is limited, therefore accelerating data flows may not necessarily be feasible. There was support in many cases as long as the ambition to accelerate data flow through the NBN did not have detrimental effects on the role and status of its members and other data providers. We also heard from one response that this is a nice to have ambition - though not essential, and the NBN should be supporting and encouraging existing channels.

6. Do you have data (in non-digital formats) that you want to mobilise?

We will be contacting those who have data in non-digital formats to complete the survey to expand on these data. The NBN Trust will seek funding when opportunities arise to mobilise these data. If you have data in non-digital formats that you wish to have digitised please complete the survey which can be found here <http://bit.ly/1uESelY> to help us build a strong and robust business case for investment in digitising the NBN member's historic data holdings.

7. We asked what you would like to see done by the NBN to attract new blood to biological recording?

We heard that the NBN should continue to build the brand and raise the profile of the Network. Suggestions for this included developing a new website, increasing media coverage, use of regional representatives to attend appropriate events. The NBN should continue to encourage and support innovation through apps, natural language feedback systems, analysis tools etc. There is a requirement to have greater engagement at a local level (1), and there should be more focus on publicising the benefits and value of biological recording, and feeding back to the recording community (5).

Bringing the Network together, and working with the Network to develop a joined up approach (14) was recognised as important to create a feeling of ownership (1) and belonging. In addition to this we heard that there should be more support for Network members (2), especially local recording organisations to engage people and get them recording, coordinate national recording schemes e.g. Big Garden birdwatch with local recording events, and assist LERCs in reporting and distributing data so that people can see their records making a difference. Where there are significant data gaps such as taxonomic or geographic, providing funding for targeted recording would be beneficial. Demonstrating data use (3) and simplifying data flows (4) would also encourage new blood, as well as making recording fun (1). It was suggested that where there are training schemes in place, more effort to retain and mentor those who have done the basic courses would help to take them to the next level. Creation of education material, guidance and tools for recorders (4) and supporting recorders through training (11) was key. Two respondents did not see this as a role for the NBN.

8. We asked, within the Strategy, if you saw yourself being involved in implementing the five Strategic Aims.

These responses have been noted and will be used in creating and implementing the Strategic Action Plan, but are omitted from this summary.

9. We asked what does NBN have to do to increase the visibility and openness of UK wildlife data?

We heard that there is support for increasing the visibility and openness of data across the NBN. This could be through developing a culture of openness and providing support to open data and make data more

accessible (16) as well as overcoming barriers of mistrust (3). Improving the data flow model (5) and working to integrate verification systems (1) would help increase the visibility of data within the Network. Additionally we heard that improving the stability and functionality of NBN Gateway and web presence (14), including improving and developing WebServices (1) would help. Other suggestions included advertising and engaging with data providers through stories of data use (5), increasing engagement with new audiences (4) and increasing ease of data use (1). Funding support for partners (9), including addressing the situation of commercial users (1) would help increase the openness of data. Providing tools that add value to biological records (1), determining how to improve the current systems (2), increasing ease of data use and expanding the data types were also requested.

10. We asked “What would prevent you sharing data globally?” We heard that most respondents (16) see no barriers to sharing data globally, or see no barriers as long as access controls and the relevant Terms and Conditions of use are in place (2). There were concerns that resolution of sensitive and personal data would have to be managed correctly (14) and that misuse of data, especially through commercial use was monitored (8). A further barrier to sharing data would be the limitation of resources (9) and the potential of undermining business models (9), or if it were against the data provider’s wishes. Data quality, data licensing, IPR and data ownership were all recognised as important issues to bear in mind when sharing data globally.

11. We asked when we use the phrase “Family of projects and systems” do you understand that that includes you and your data management systems? We heard that most respondents (41) are familiar with this terminology and recognise that they are included. However, 13 respondents are aware that they are included, though they would like clarity, 16 respondents did not feel part of this, and 3 were not sure how they fit in.

12. We asked, within the Strategy, if you saw yourself being involved in implementing the five Strategic Aims.

These responses have been noted and will be used in creating and implementing the Strategic Action Plan, but are omitted from this summary.

13. We asked how the NBN could captivate and engage people about wildlife and biological recording most effectively? The majority of respondents (19) suggested the NBN facilitate activities and further support those in the Network involved in this area. It was suggested that it was especially important to engage with, and use resources at a local level (5), and improve the NBN website (8) to provide more signposting of events. Media and events (5), and demonstrating the value and power of data (5) would also help to engage a wider audience. It was identified that many different organisations and individuals are working on engaging people about recording, and the NBN should share resources (3) from this work. Targeted outreach (4) and making recording fun and accessible (5) were suggested. One suggestion was that preventing commercial use of data would help engage people more.

Alongside the suggestions, there were four respondents who did not see this as the role of the NBN, and a further four who requested a text change and clarification around this aim. It was recognised that through implementing the Strategy (1) this could captivate and engage people about biological recording.

14. We asked if you support the NBN being a “one-stop-shop” and do you see your data and information as part of this? 41 responses support this, though this support was frequently caveated as the ‘Network’ being the one-stop shop, as opposed to the ‘NBN Gateway’. Of those who do not support the NBN being a “one-stop shop” the reasons for this were concerns around data quality, the potential that this

would undermine the role of LERCs (7), a Network cannot be a 'one-stop-shop' (17) and should instead be a shop window.

15. We asked, within the Strategy, if you saw yourself being involved in implementing the five Strategic Aims.

These responses have been noted and will be used in creating and implementing the Strategic Action Plan, but are omitted from this summary.

16. We asked you if your own data capture and storage infrastructure are stable and secure? We heard a mix of responses with 42 respondents saying their infrastructures are stable and secure and seven saying that it was not, or not totally. There were concerns that whilst infrastructures are currently secure and stable, when Recorder 6 is no longer supported this situation would change (10), and that infrastructure is secure but not necessarily stable (2). We heard that everyone recognises the importance of this, and people see this as a priority which they are either looking to work on, or are currently working to improve.

17. We asked how mature are your data management systems? Many responses asked for clarity on this and were either not sure what this means, or not sure how they could assess this (14). 27 responses have very mature data management systems, or are in development (3). Very few were either variable (6), not very mature (3) or non-existent (1).

18. We asked if you will commit to making your systems interoperable with other NBN family members and to following NBN standards? We heard that the majority of respondents will commit to this (49) and seven will commit in principle but want to know more as to what they are signing up to. A caveat to support in some instances was the cost and time resource implications that may result and as long as the taxonomic checklists are kept up to date. Only two responses do not commit to this at the present.

19. We asked, within the Strategy, if you saw yourself being involved in implementing the five Strategic Aims.

These responses have been noted and will be used in creating and implementing the Strategic Action Plan, but are omitted from this summary.

20. We asked what does the NBN have to do to increase its sustainability? We heard many suggestions to this questions which have been summarised below. In addition to these suggestions we also heard a request to clarify the word 'sustainability' (2).

- Provide long term funding model for NBN Network, build membership and reduce requirement of funding from Government (16)
- Prevent commercial abuse of data and support local recording networks (1)
- Ensure financial security of lead partners and data providers and support a network of sustainable LERCs across UK (7)
- Promote the value of Network (16) through ensuring Network members feel included and widen the membership, working as overarching body that supports its members to grow and further their aims and reducing duplication and remove competition
- Increase trust within Network (3) to develop mature and trusting relationship with NBN partner organisations.
- Make data more available (4) including improving data quality, making data more accessible at a better level and increasing the breadth of data

- Ensure all NBN members are represented at board level and making the role of Board more explicit in implementing the strategy (2)
- Grow staff (1) and increase the size of NBN Trust team

21. We asked how you would like us to improve the NBN membership scheme? We heard that this should be through continuing free membership to data suppliers and creating greater emphasis on the Network (9), providing more benefits (7) and raising the profile of the NBN (2). We heard that the cost needs to be reduced, and the membership should be clarified and simplified (3). Further suggestions were given in question 22.

22. We asked what membership benefits would make you want to increase your support for NBN? We heard that there should be clearly specified business benefits that merit investment and that we should change the membership scheme such that people feel proud to be a member as they know that their data are being used more effectively as a result of the collective work of the NBN. One suggestion was that being a member should have an attached accreditation and hence create recognised value to people the NBN work with, this in turn would strengthen the Network (1). Access to funding and grants (2) and opportunities for collaborative working were requested, as well as more events and a cheaper conference for members (5). Many responses would like access to support, IT, technical help and standards (7) and advocacy and support for data providers (5). Better access to data (6) for members, the opportunity for a greater voice (1) and promotion of data providers work (1) were also requested and we heard that some do not feel they need any benefits (6) beyond being part of the Network.

23. We asked how would you like to influence NBN governance? It was identified that reviewing the composition of the Board of Trustees (12) would ensure all parts of the Network have a voice. Continued consultation and workshop opportunities (8) were requested as well as holding the AGM at the conference and allocating voting rights on governance (3). Ensuring all groups are represented within the Network and ensuring a good balance between data providers and data users (4) would help as well as more regular communications (1). Simplifying the membership grades to widen the membership base would create a greater opportunity for improving participation (1). Four responses would like to influence NBN governance via ALERC, NFBR and CIEEM (4) representations. Two responses would like clarity further around this question.

24. We asked you what leadership you would like from the NBN Trust? We heard that the NBN should continue promoting best practice, creating guidance and standards and simplifying data flows (14). Continuing to build a sense of community and Network (7) was requested and liaising and lobbying on behalf of the Network (6) was required. Recognising and supporting the recorders and partnership (3) and providing a clear role for Network members (2) was asked for, as well as a clearer vision and Strategy (2). Encouraging use of data (1) and supporting LERCs (1) was raised. Some said that they did not require leadership (2) and others would like to see the NBN Trust change their name (2) to reduce confusion between the component parts of the Network. Four responses would like further clarity as to this question.

General comments we received have also been noted and will be taken forward in the final version of the Strategy and in implementing the Strategic Action Plan.