Short Note:

Access to Ordnance Survey datasets for NGO Open Data providers

Ellen Wilson, Head of Conservation Data Management, RSPB (ellen.wilson@rspb.org.uk)
John Sawyer, CEO, National Biodiversity Network (j.sawyer@nbn.org.uk)

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Executive Summary

The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) is the UK's largest partnership for nature. Network Data Partners collect and share biological data to educate and inform and have created and shared the vast majority of the UK's evidence base for biodiversity that is used by government and non-government organisations on a day-to-day basis.

The NBN is wholly dependent on its Data Partners for the supply of timely, up-to-date, high quality biological data. Network Data Partners operate a diverse array of biological recording schemes across the UK to monitor all elements of biodiversity. These schemes are largely dependent on volunteer, citizen scientists for this ongoing natural history recording.

There is currently no suitable framework for these schemes (and the Third Sector in general) to access to Ordnance Survey data.

We propose that a new OS license is developed to provide for better delivery of government and charitable objectives.

Such a license would enable the Third Sector, in particular those involved in the delivery of the evidence base for biodiversity, to have unlimited use of premium Ordnance Survey data for any non-profit-making purpose. This will enable the Third Sector to play a full role in delivery of public objectives such as the Aichi Targets and in delivery of other public goods (including health, social and environmental). This would also directly aid the NBN in achieving its Strategy to 2020.

Context

- The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) provides the infrastructure and standards for the sharing of biodiversity data.
- Biodiversity data collected by Network members are part of the UK's evidence base and essential for science, decision-making and education.
- Creation of the evidence base for biodiversity data relies, uniquely, on the capacity and capability of NGOs and volunteers.
- Access to Ordnance Survey data limits the ability of NGOs and the NBN to operate effectively; there is no current licensing framework to meet their needs, however geographic data are essential to their business operations.
- Agreeing a new licensing model for Third Sector use of digital Ordnance Survey data would be transformative and of particular significance for the environmental sector at a time when public spending is diminishing.

The licensing 'gap'

- NGOs have free access to premium Ordnance Survey data for any purpose for which they are contracted to conduct Government business. However, this covers just a small proportion of an NGO's activities and does not grant the NGO rights for <u>internal business use</u> which is an increasing issue.

- NGOs can take out an internal business use licence for Ordnance Survey data but even when discounted the costs are still prohibitive – NGOs do not have the budget to fully licence <u>premium datasets</u>.

- Administration of Ordnance Survey licensing for premium datasets (to fulfil distribution licences and publishing returns) is cumbersome; simplified <u>administrative arrangements</u> would save time and money and be highly beneficial.

- NGO's cannot assume that another NGO has the same access to Ordnance Survey data; there is no cross-Sector licence agreement. As a result, <u>interoperability</u> of NGOs within their own sector, and across other Sectors, is compromised.

- The lack of easy and affordable access to premium Ordnance Survey data risks driving the Third Sector to use alternatives which will result in <u>lost opportunities</u>; the UK is losing out if Third Sector use of premium data remains tightly restricted to only work that is contracted by Government. This restriction potentially drives use away from Ordnance Survey products - but NBN members really want to use Ordnance Survey products not lesser equivalents.

A new licensing framework

We seek a new licensing framework that is open to all Third Sector organisations and volunteers collecting or creating and <u>openly sharing</u> biodiversity data (with exceptions for environmentally sensitive records) or other data of public value to deliver government objectives and public good.

The framework would fully permit the internal use of the data for the delivery of any public good identified as a charitable objective so that the data may be used for all internal business uses of a charitable organisation (see below for example uses). This supports the infrastructure necessary to operate the Third Sector in order to develop their capacity and capability for contributing to the UK's evidence base (and other public objectives).

We suggest a Third Sector Mapping Agreement (TSMA) scheme could operate by identifying charitable data providers (determined by being a registered Data Partner on the NBN Gateway or <u>data.gov.uk</u> etc). Bona fida Open Data providers would be licensed for all not-for-profit non-commercial uses of premium Ordnance Survey data. In so doing, government initiatives such as Open Data Strategies, the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and invasive species, pollinator strategies or public health or ecosystem monitoring are supported with no real cost to the public purse.

Alternative options and their limitations

- <u>Discounting the cost of Ordnance Survey data</u>: unless the discount reduces the price to less than 5% of the list price, this option does not remove cost as an issue for not-for-profit organisations.

- <u>Amending the PSMA and OSMA to include the Third Sector</u>: unless this amendment grants the Third Sector the right to internal business use of Ordnance Survey data, this option does not remove the lack of internal business use as an issue.

- <u>No change/no new licensing framework</u>: unless there is a change, this option does not remove the lack of equal access to data, lost opportunities nor interoperability as issues.

Use case scenarios

- Production of field survey maps for collecting biodiversity data and use of web map services to stream mapping to recording apps on a mobile device for NGO or public use.

- Digital capture of polygons, lines and points to create new data such as areas of interest or activity, or to plot assets or infrastructure so that these new data can be created and then openly shared.

- Background mapping for visualisation of business information including biodiversity data, land management activities, site condition or state/pressure/response data.

- Production of static and interactive maps for use in magazines, websites, trail leaflets and display boards to engage and inform.

- Background mapping for online recording and reporting of biodiversity information and for use in the NBN Gateway and Atlas of Living Scotland online portals or equivalent.

- Vector data for use in geo-referencing and analysing data in internal business systems or public tools such as the Living Atlases, e.g. to: to inform decision-makers, for contributing to delivery of the Aichi Targets, for detailed inventories of wildlife, for registering land with the Land Registry, for understanding where visitors come from to use nature reserves or heritage sites, for working with Emergency Services such as the Police, for working with local parishes, communities, for working with local and national health services.

- Background mapping for creating interactive 'story maps' to engage the public and encourage outdoor interests such as rambling, camping, conservation or environmental monitoring and protection.

- Background mapping for viewing open data to allow public use and so greater democracy in local decisions.

Premium datasets of value

Vector Map Local raster and vector, 1:50,000 raster, 1:25,000 raster, OS MasterMap Imagery, OS MasterMap topography/water/paths/transport, AddressPoint, CodePoint with Polygons, OS Terrain 5, Points of Interest.