

National Biodiversity Network Trust

Board of Trustees

MINUTES: 22 February 2017

11am – 3.00pm

Darwin Centre 8th floor, Natural History Museum, London



Present:

Professor Michael Hassell (Chair)
Jo Judge
Andrew Wood
John Davy Bowker
Alan Stewart
Tim Hill
Richard Pywell
Tom Webb
Ian Owens
Paul Rose
Helen Wilkinson
Roddy Fairley

In attendance:

Sarah Hyslop (*Minutes*)
Mandy Rudd (Representing ALERC)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Mark Diamond, Andy Clements, Matt Frost (MBA rep)

2. Welcome and Introductions

There were no new Trustees present and therefore no introductions were required.

3. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

24 February 2016 Meeting

AP7; Investigate the withdrawal of the OS survey access for LERC's **ACTION: JJ**
DISCHARGED; to revisit once the NBN Atlas is live

Actions from 6 July 2016 Meeting

AP1; To draft an open data policy **ACTION: JJ and team**
CARRIED FORWARD – JJ to meet with the ODI after today's meeting and will draft a paper for the July Board

AP2; Draft a project plan for the transitional phase of the Atlas development and detail finances, timescales, actions, resources. **ACTION JJ and team**
DISCHARGED; on agenda

AP3; To have an item at the November to discuss open data and how this benefits the data providers
CARRIED FORWARD to July 2017 Board

AP4: To start conversations with agency contacts on the transfer of funds for Gateway / Atlas from JNCC to the NBN
ACTION JJ and team
DISCHARGED

Actions from 9th November 2016 Meeting

AP1: To take the revised MTFs to the February Board and have this agreed by the end of this FY. **ACTION: JJ**
CARRIED FORWARD; deferred until July following discussions at FMC in January

AP2: To check if MBA have offered support with the working groups and to let Matt Frost know. **ACTION: JJ**
DISCHARGED

AP3: To develop the fixed charge for breach of licenses and report back to the Feb Board. **ACTION: JJ**
DISCHARGED; on agenda

AP4: To share the job spec/ description and budget for the new developer post with the Board. **ACTION: JJ**
DISCHARGED

AP5: To review the risk register and take this for discussion at the February Board. **ACTION: JJ**
DISCHARGED; on agenda

AP6: To set further dates for November 2017, February and July 2018 **ACTION: SH**
CARRIED FORWARD; date set for November 2017 (8th) to set dates for 2018

4. Chairman's remarks

The Chairman shared with the Board that a new working group will be created to discuss the governance and constitution of the Board. This will be done after the membership review has been finalized but prior to the AGM which will be held in November during the annual conference. The Board agreed to this proposal.

5. Items of business from the Chief Executive

Chief Executive Report February 2017 (*TTE17-01 Paper 1*)

Please refer to the paper for the full detail.

Highlights

- A meeting has taken place to discuss this year's conference and a theme around data use has been suggested.
- The temporary programmer is now in post and mainly dealing with the transfer from the Gateway to the Atlas
- There has been no response to the job advert for the Developer post – the job spec has been revised and the salary increased to £45K but this hasn't yet yielded any applications. To possibly try the recruiter route which could be costly but might be the only way to get someone in post.

AP1: To speak to Carl at the Open Data Institute regarding the Developer recruitment **ACTION: JJ**

- The Atlas is now in the user testing phase. There have been a total of 180 million records loaded to the Atlas to date with only 2 small schemes saying that they don't want their data transferred at this time.
- RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch data to possibly go onto the Atlas – this could open the door to lots of unverified data but it would be positive promotion for the NBN.

- Guidance on historic data – this information has now been taken off the website until lawyers can advise further as we have received feedback that it's in direct contradiction of our data exchange principles.

Strategic Aim 1

There is now a process set for direct upload to the Atlas.

There are currently 90 million records at public resolution. Expect 40 million records to come from the Gateway to the Atlas during March.

Data will not be transferred from the Gateway to the Atlas until we have a signed data partner agreement and the deadline for this is 28 February. At the end of March any data left not transferred to the Atlas will be held at JNCC under disaster recovery. This data won't be available to the public.

AP2: To contact the Public Records Office regarding data held at JNCC which has not been transferred to the Atlas from the Gateway.

ACTION: JJ

Verification

See paper; Verification within the NBN Atlas TTE17-01 P02

For the 'submit a sighting' function on the Atlas data will need to go through iRecord. This data will be flagged as such with a verification star level of certainty based on the process used and the verifiers capability.

It may not be possible to add a verification flag onto historic datasets i.e. data transferred from the Gateway but this can be used for records adding to the Atlas going forward.

iRecord only checks the taxon is correct and won't do further checks that Record Cleaner (RC) would do such as location. The temporary programmer is looking at whether data should go through RC. OBIS ([Ocean Biogeographic Information System](#)) have around 30 quality control flags which they implement across all records. They also scale their checks based on if they are a hard to verify species. To pick up on this once the Atlas is live.

'Submit a sighting' function

This has been disabled on the Atlas due to there being no verification functionality but this could potentially cause lack of engagement and support from users. Data submitted here would be held on a spreadsheet until such time when it could be verified and loaded but there is the option to show this data but with a flag to say awaiting verification. GBIF do give data a flag if they agree so we could implement their approval on these records.

AP3: To inform the working group that a 'submit a sighting' function will be reinstated and unverified data will be made available on the NBN Atlas

ACTION: JJ

Strategic Aim 2

Capture resolution data

CEH have confirmed that there is a way forward to provide the capture resolution data to those who require it e.g. EA. The cost is £3K and £115 per dataset and ALERC members may be able to cover the latter.

There are risks with providing this facility;

1. Provides an alternative and unresponsive of open data
2. CEH wouldn't be able to continue with this long term
3. Long term burden if open data frees up as the Atlas doesn't allow for the resolution to be changed and so the dataset would need to be resubmitted.

Pros to setting up this system;

1. This would be beneficial for us to do as this impacts on the amount of funding the NBNT could receive via EA and if we can't offer an alternative solution for this then funding would be cut by £10K
2. It is also seen as an interim measure to allow time for more full resolution data to be shared on the Atlas.
3. Protect us from someone else setting up a competing system which we have no input or control over.
4. There are gradients to open data and we need to provide this solution during this transition

Sensitive species

Sensitive species data will be submitted to us at full resolution but blurred on the Atlas.

Holding data at different levels is complex and to note that this impacts on hosting as this is charged based on the number of records.

To make people aware of the timescales – ideal is that all data (except sensitive species data) is open or shared at a high resolution by 2020. Need certainty from government that by 2020 they will base their decisions on data that is open at full resolution only and not on data that is hidden.

With the exception of sensitive species data, data on the NBN Atlas will only be stored at the publicly available resolution – there won't be access controls on the Atlas so anyone requiring capture resolution data that is not available on the Atlas would need to use the CEH interim system or make their own arrangements with the data provider.

AP4: To detail the staged approach from now until 2020 with the risks and how these will be managed. To circulate this to the Board in the next few weeks.

ACTION: JJ

Commercial Use

See paper; Guidance on the meaning of non-commercial / commercial use TTE17-01 P03 and P03.a

The steering group could not agree on which option to choose and so have referred this decision to the Board.

Options 3 and 4 are not supported by the Board. It is advisable to firm up what constitutes commercial use as this could potentially free up more data on the Atlas.

The Board agreed that option 2 would be the way forward and to have clear examples of what constitutes commercial and non-commercial use and a note to say to contact us if users are unsure.

AP5: To firm up the commercial and non-commercial use information and provide some examples of what constitutes both.

ACTION: JJ and team

Breach of licences

See paper; Breach of licence conditions TTE17-01 P04

The Board discussed the recommendation regarding NBNT's role to the staged approach for breaches of licence use.

Key points are noted below;

- Fine should be commensurate to amount of income lost
- Should investigate amounts reclaimable through small claims court and potentially link fixed charge to that
- Risks are that data providers could remove datasets from the NBN Atlas if we don't implement this.

- This security would benefit the smaller data partners as the larger organizations would be better equipped to deal with this themselves.
- The terms and conditions need to be fully detailed so to not force the NBNT into taking action if we don't feel it necessary

The Board approved the suggested process for the NBNT on misuse of data and breaches in licences.

AP6: To firm up the information on misuse and breach of licence and share this as required.

ACTION: JJ and team

Strategic Aim 3

Communications

See paper; Communication Report TTE17-01 P05

Refer to the paper for the full detail

Atlas launch

There will be no big launch for the Atlas at the start of April as it was agreed that users should have chance to test this and feed into the further development. There will however be lots of promotion via social media and Network News.

NBN Awards

It was suggested that we should look to judge the award nominees blind i.e. without names. To also look to test the questions within the form to ensure that we are not being gender specific with the wording used.

Possible 'celebrities' for the awards and promotion of the Atlas i.e. slot on One Show / Springwatch etc

Chris Packham is the Vice Chair for BTO

Tom Webb advised that Mike Dilger did a talk for students

Miranda Krertorvnikoff did some filming for the One Show at Freshwater Biological Association

Lunch

The SBIF Review: briefing for the NBN Trustees – Ellen Wilson RSPB and SBIF Chair (TTE17-01 Paper 14)

Please refer to the separate slides and information provided by Ellen Wilson

- NBN and Trustees are asked to promote the SBIF questionnaire which will be going out on 1st March and will be open until the 31st March
- Ellen will share the results and draft business case with Trustees
- To look at infrastructure and duplication of work – this could potentially free staff up to do other bits of NBNT role
- The date for the July workshop may change as this clashes with the NBN Board

Strategic Aim 4

Development of the Atlas

See papers; Estimated costs for the Atlas TTE17-01 P06 and Atlas project plan TTE17-01 P07

<https://nbnatlas.org/> is now live and ready for user testing over the next few weeks

Hosting is a large cost for the Atlas but the best deal appears to be securing a three year deal with Amazon at £35K each year. There are advantages to using a commercial provider including 24/7 support, security and back-ups of site

To explore possibility of donated hosting from Google and others.

NBNT staff have been assisting Sweden with starting the process of setting up their own Atlas. The NBN Atlas Scotland is advanced compared to other countries.

NI are still committed to fund their part of the Atlas and would still like to have their own but it's unlikely to be this financial year.

AP7: To secure Atlas funding from the agencies for the next three financial years as soon as possible.

ACTION: JJ

NBN Atlas will now go live on 27 March rather than 1 April due to this being a weekend.

To be aware that we may be asked if the Atlas is more expensive to run compared to the Gateway – to factor in that the Gateway would have needed extra development and funds to keep it going and that the Atlas cost will decrease once fundamental development has taken place. Going forward the main cost will relate to hosting and developer staff time.

To note that we may be able to do the sensitive species enhanced access work within the role of the in house developer and this would save on costs to CSIRO

Isle of Man have also expressed an interest in having an Atlas platform and may have some funding in place soon.

Strategic Aim 5

Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

A revised document will be taken forward to FMC in June and then to the Board in July

This needs further work and to also link this to the work of the membership review

Risk Register TTE17-01 P08

This has now been reviewed following the last Board meeting and some of the residual risk ratings have now changed due to mitigation.

There are some conflicts between risks and if one changes it can impact on another

Revisiting the Board governance and MTFS could help with the diverging views and financial risks.

Engagement – if this risk is high then we need to think if we have our strategy correct.

Strategy and governance to be included to the register.

Some technical errors with regards to risk ratings, colour coding and directional arrows – to amend these on the register.

Performance management guidelines and template TTE17-01 P09 and P09.a

Jo will be looking at staff job descriptions to ensure these are still accurate and to clearly define roles.

To also look at the management of staff.

The Board agreed that the suggested process was good and thorough.

6. Finance and Management Issues

Finance Report for Period 3 (TTE17-01 Paper P10)

To refer to the paper for the full detail.

The Board agreed that we should look to increase conference ticket prices by a small amount to deal with the possible £4K loss as per previous years.

Draft Budget for 2017-2018 (TTE17-01 Paper P11)

The budget comes in nearly balanced with a £180 loss. There are no further cost savings to be made and therefore no room for errors or losses such as on the conference.

Included in the income is £10K sponsorship and £10K for new members which may not be met given the feedback from the membership scheme review.

Membership Review Update TTE17-01 P12

There will be a transitional phase to keep existing members on the same fee with new members on the new fees.

Pay what you can afford scheme approved by the Board and to sell the benefits of joining.

To also promote to members what we can do for them and to better balance how we support smaller schemes and organisations.

To attract universities we could present the Atlas at the BES conference and promote open data, value of biodiversity data and uses of the Atlas – could share case studies of what people have done with the data – this links to our proposed theme for the conference.

AP8: To contact all existing members to let them know the outcome of the membership review and what their new member category is called i.e. changed from bronze to organisational. **ACTION: GS**

Board Competencies Summary Update TTE17-01 P13

Trustees who have not yet completed this to do so and then a final summary will be produced. To re think the required and desired competencies and what constitutes a 'problem' or 'risk' area i.e. not all will have a professional competency but may be qualified to represent their organisation on the Board with their working knowledge.

Governance

To link this to the SBIF review. To agree what we are trying to do and how this should be done and then who is best placed to do this.

7. Information Items**Annual Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report for 16-17 TTE17-01 P15**

This is the first report of this kind and the Board to advise if anything is missed and should be included.

8. Mark papers as confidential

The following papers will be marked as confidential

TTE17-01 Paper 6

TTE17-01 Paper 10

7. Date of next meeting

5th July 2017, 8th November 2017

Signed:

Chair _____

Date: _____

Action Points

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