NBN Trust

Business Plan

FY 1st April 2018 - 31st March 2019

Contents

1. Introduction

This business plan describes the delivery against our Strategy 2015 – 2020 pursuing our vision that *Biological data collected and shared openly by the Network are central to the UK's learning and understanding of its biodiversity and are critical to all decision making about nature and the environment* for the financial year 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019.

This plan will set out the current staffing and financial situation and the key points from the Action Plan which will be the main focus for the NBN Trust for this year.

2. Summary

At the start of the 2018/19 period, it is anticipated that the NBN Trust's budget will balance at the end of the year. However, there is little margin for dealing with unforeseen costs and the Trust is reliant on a very limited funding source. It is proving harder to agree funding levels with the country agencies (our main funders) and there are often delays in the funds being paid, which puts the Trust in a precarious position as expenditure is incurred before the income has been received. There is a need to identify and realise additional funding streams to ensure the sustainability of the NBN Trust. This will be the focus of the NBN Trust's Trustees at the Board meeting in July 2018. The outcomes of this may necessitate revisions to this business plan.

There is a high level of confidence in the ability of the Trust to deliver the actions identified as priorities in section 6. However, there is less confidence that the actions identified for the wider Network, as set out in the NBN Action Plan 2016 – 2020, will be delivered. There is a lack of engagement with, and/or ownership/responsibility for, delivering the NBN Strategy by the majority of the Network. There are a small number of individuals who are willing to engage, however, even then it is perceived that the NBN Trust should undertake the lion's share of the work involved. This is an unrealistic expectation for such a small organisation. The Trust needs to be unafraid of addressing these expectations and increasing awareness of its limited capacity and using this transparency to reduce expectations and demand greater input from the Network where appropriate.

A number of external factors will impact on the Trust's ability to deliver on its strategic aims and objectives this year and in the future. Most notably, the reduction in the country agencies budgets and, therefore, funding available for the biodiversity sector as a whole. Additionally, the differing views on Open Data, which will impact on the quantity and quality of the data shared via the NBN Atlas, the recommendations of the SBIF Review (and Scottish Government's response) and inevitably, preparations for and implications of, Brexit will all affect the Trust. The Trust's policy and vision regarding Open Data will form part of the board discussions in July.

Overall, the Trust will be able to deliver on this business plan. However, it will not be able to further develop the NBN Atlas in any meaningful way within the current budget constraints. Given the potential of the NBN Atlas to transform data sharing and use, this is a significant lost opportunity and we need to be careful not to be left behind as technology advances. Similarly, while the small team continually over performs and over delivers, further investment is needed to increase skill sets and enable the provision of extra services and support to our Network members.

3. Staffing

The budget proposed for 2018-19 includes salaries for 7.6 FTE. This maintains the core permanent staff of CEO, Finance and Business Officer and Senior Communications Officer, along with six posts that are currently on fixed term contracts. These are the Scottish Liaison Officer, Project Development Officer, Membership and Business Development Officer,

Communications Officer, Technical and Data Support Officer and a Systems Developer. It also includes an Administration Officer until January 2019, who is providing maternity cover for the Finance and Business Officer.

In general staff morale is high and the team are motivated and dedicated. There is a need to continue to monitor levels of pay, but all seem happy with the ethos and working environment provided by the Trust.

There are two main areas, project management and finance/accountancy, in which extra training and/or staff with more formal qualifications would be beneficial. A level of management between the CEO and project staff would also be useful, to remove some of the day-to-day management which currently occupies the CEO's time, therefore enabling more time and resource to be focused on more strategic matters

Depending on the outcomes of the board's discussions in July, it may be necessary to increase staff numbers and recruit individuals with skills to enable the further development of the NBN Trust that are not currently present within the team.

4. Funding Summary

Table 1 below, provides a summary of the expected income for 2018-19, further detail can be found in the finance report.

Table 1. Summary of expected income

Type	Amount
Unrestricted Secured	£193,190
Unrestricted Unsecured	£21,615
Restricted Unsecured	£160,500
Designated	£20,000
Total	**£395,305**

In addition to the income summarised above, the Trust also has £81,355 in reserves, which is in excess of the required three-month buffer.

Potential new funding streams will be investigated and implemented where possible during this financial year, following an internal strategy review to be undertaken in Summer 2018.

5. Expenditure Summary

Table 1 below, provides a summary of the forecast expenditure for 2018-19, further detail can be found in the finance report.

Table 2. Summary of forecast expenditure

Type	Amount
Staff costs	£244,293
Meetings & T&S	£23,200
Office Costs	£17,930
Professional contracts	£8,650
Communications	£25,140
NBN Atlas	£85,000
Other	£1,035
Total	**£395,248**

6. Action Plan Priorities

The NBN Action Plan 2016-2020 sets out the objectives and actions the NBN Trust members and data partners will make to deliver the NBN Strategy 2015 – 2020. The Action Plan has 21 objectives and 95 actions that should be implemented to achieve the Network's vision. This section sets out which actions led by the NBN Trust will be the priorities in 2018-19. Details on priorities led by the NBN Trust for 2019-20 are in Appendix A. Due to a delay in recruiting a Systems Developer and uncertainty over funding for some development tasks, some actions scheduled for 2017/18 have been carried over to this year. To accommodate this, some actions that were identified as priorities for this financial year in the 2018/19 Business Plan have been postponed until 2019/20.

The actions can be split into those that require a 'one -off' review or implementation and those which are critical, but 'business as usual' ongoing work streams. These are set out in table 3 and 4 respectively. Progress against the 'one-off' priority actions will be reported thrice yearly to the Finance and Management Committee and the NBN Trust Board.

Table 3. One-off priority actions for the NBN Trust for 2018-19

Strategic Aim	Strategic Action	Milestones	Measure of success	NBN Lead?	Supported by
1. Record, collect, diversify, enhance & mobilise biological data	Streamline and standardise data capture processes and promote through use of league tables, data dashboards, summary statistics and data health checks	Dashboards & other metrics agreed by steering groups and board by 30/08/2018 Implemented by 31/10/2018	Dashboards and other metrics live on NBN Atlas and other NBN Atlas portals	Yes	
2. Make biological data and information available to everyone	Improve data interrogation and visualisation tools through: workshops with user groups, user-centred design, and interactive collaborative events such as hackathons	A plan and timescales for workshops, user groups and hackathons agreed by 31/10/2018 At least 3 events held by 31/03/2019	New and/or improved interrogation and visualisation tools are available on the NBN Atlas(es)	Yes	Working Group 5: Increasing use of our data
CARRIED FORWARD FROM 2017/18					

Strategic Aim	Strategic Action	Milestones	Measure of success	NBN Lead?	Supported by
4. Provide the best biological information Management Infrastructure	Development and implementation of system for enhanced access to capture resolution sensitive species records on the NBN Atlas	System agreed by 30/09/2017, implemented by 31/03/2019	Authorised users able to access capture resolution sensitive species data through NBN Atlas	Yes	NBN Atlas Steering Groups
	Hold stakeholder workshops and determine priorities for development of further functionality	All workshops held by 31/10/2018 Plan for future development work agreed by 31/12/2018	Priorities, timescales & costs for further functionality agreed	Yes	All network members and funders
	Development and implementation of customisable user pages	Implemented by 31/10/2018	Users able to customise and save their account pages	Yes	
	Develop and implement a sustainable funding model for the NBN Trust and prepare a medium term financial strategy	Internal strategy review completed by 31/07/2018 Recommendations implemented within timescales approved by the board	The NBN Trust generates at least 50% of unrestricted income from new sources from 01/04/2020	Yes	

Commented [JJ1]: Our unrestricted income for 2019/20 is estimated to be £193,430, so this would be a target of c. £100,000.

Table 4. Ongoing actions in support of the current strategy which are a priority for 2018-19

Strategic Aim	Strategic Action	NBN Lead?	Supported by
1. Record, collect, diversify, enhance & mobilise biological data	Streamline and standardise data capture processes and promote through use of league tables, data dashboards, summary statistics and data health checks	Yes	BRC, CIEEM
2. Make biological data and information available to everyone	Improve data interrogation and visualisation tools through: workshops with user groups, user-centred design, and interactive collaborative events such as hackathons	Yes	BTO
	Communicate regularly with data users and promote and demonstrate the many different examples of how biological data can be used, applied and visualised (through online tutorials, case studies and NBN eNews and other media)	Yes	NFBR, OU
3. Captivate and engage people about wildlife	Promote the data infrastructure and the tools available and provide training to users in how to make the most of the current infrastructure	Yes	
5. Support the development of the NBN, its board and its members	Deliver a programme of training and events to support the network	Yes	
	Promote the NBN Strategy as the vehicle for collaboration over biological data collection, sharing and use	Yes	ALERC

7. Key Milestones
Table 5 below summarises the key milestones for the one-off priority actions for the NBN Trust for 2018/19.

Table 5. key milestones for the one-off priority actions for 2018/19

Activity	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Dashboard & Metrics			Metrics agreed	Technical Development	Dashboard live					
Sensitive species access[2]		Alternative funding sources investigated		Technical Development (if funded)						Access system implemented
Stakeholder workshops[3]	Scottish workshop held				All workshops held		Plan for future development work agreed			
Customisable user pages			Requirements agreed		Technical Development	Customisable pages live				
Development of a sustainable funding model	Strategy group meeting	Strategy discussed at board meeting		Grant applications drafted		Grant Applications submitted to HLF and Esmee Fairbairn Discussions with Chief Scientists' Group held				Preparation for implementation of sustainability project if grants have been awarded

8. Risks

Table 6 below summarises some of the main risks to delivering the key priority actions within the 2018-19 financial year. For the risks affecting the NBN Trust as a whole, please refer to the Risk Register.

Risk	Description	Risk Rating	Mitigation
Insufficient funding	Majority of funding (both restricted & unrestricted) comes from government agencies, whose budgets are reducing	Likelihood Medium / Impact High	Agree MoAs & schedule of works in first quarter of year Develop alternative funding streams
Loss of staff	NBN Secretariat team is small, any loss of staff would have a large impact on delivery of aims and objectives	Likelihood Low / Impact High	Increase resilience by greater knowledge transfer between staff Increase staff benefits were possible to retain staff
Strategy	Lack of engagement in NBN Strategy from wider network Strategy out of data/no longer reflects current climate Strategy not delivering on the NBN's purpose and vision	Likelihood Medium / Impact High	Internal review of strategy by NBN Trust board
Insufficient engagement by the wider network	The NBN Secretariat needs expert input from network members to deliver on the majority of the key actions.	Likelihood Medium / Impact High	Work with engaged partners to help engage those less interested. Highlight benefits of informing decisions affecting network
Diverging views on Atlas development	Lack of consensus about visibility, openness & functionality	Likelihood Medium / Impact High	Develop a collaborative and cooperative approach to decision making
Technology	Not keeping pace with technological advances, insufficient investment in technology and development of NBN Atlas	Likelihood Medium/ Impact Medium	Involvement with international Atlas development community Support from CSIRO

Board of Trustees   TTE18-03 P04

Appendix A.

The following table shows which of the remaining 'one-off' actions from the NBN Action Plan 2016-2020 are proposed as priorities for 2019/20.

Table A1. NBN Trust Priorities for 2019/20

Action Plan Code	Strategic Action	Original Priority	Time-scale	Revised priority	NBN Lead?	Who else is involved?
1B.2	Develop and implement a programme of work to capture ecosystem and habitat data	Low	One-off	Moderate	Yes	RSPB, CIEEM, SNH, NE, NRW, CeDAR, JNCC
1B.1	Build platforms for sharing of data types beyond species and habitat data (e.g., to integrate data from Earth Observation, genetic sequencing and eDNA)	Moderate	Ongoing	Moderate	Yes	SNH, NE, NRW, CeDAR, JNCC
1A.4	Establish an NBN Data Management Accreditation Scheme to improve data quality assurance and promote best practice for data capture and curation systems	Low	One-off	Low	Yes	ALERC, RSPB, CIEEM
1A.5	Create an NBN toolbox of data capture systems and tools that meet NBN standards	Low	Ongoing	Low	Yes	NHM
2B.2	Provide accreditation for data providers and data users	Moderate	One-off	Low	Yes	CIEEM, OU
4C.1	Prepare and implement a technical vision and strategy for NBN data infrastructure for data capture, management and dissemination (in conjunction with NBN Trust members and international partners)	Mission Critical	One-off	Moderate	Yes	BRC, RSPB, SNH, NE, NRW, CeDAR