SBIF Review of the Biological Recording Infrastructure in Scotland Highlight Report

SPONSORS	SBIF Advisory Group
CIRCULATION LIST	SBIF Advisory Group (and disseminated via SBIF web page and Twitter)
DATE	27/07/2020
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FREQUENCY	Quarterly
OVERALL RAG STATUS	Green

Latest Update

This highlight report covers the period since September 2019! We were busy in the last quarter of 2019 giving evidence at two parliamentary committees, carrying out SBIF advocacy at various conferences and supporting development of a SEFARI Fellowship on innovative environmental monitoring with SNH and SEPA. In December we reached a major milestone in submitting a formal proposal to Scottish Government for an investment programme to implement the recommendations of the SBIF Review. This proposal outlined six projects for completion by 2025 and marked the end of the SBIF Review Project. We also thanked Ed Mackey for all of his input, energy and commitment to SBIF and NBN – we all wish him a most enjoyable retirement – and welcomed Iain Sime who takes the baton from Ed in joining the SBIF Advisory Group on behalf of SNH. In March 2020, the SBIF Advisory Group undertook a post-project review to take stock of what we have learned and achieved and to identify our next steps forward. In May, SNH announced funding for the SBIF Development Officer to continue working with the SBIF community as we progress implementation of the recommendations of the Review. In June, we facilitated a workshop with SNH to identify highest priorities for this year; we are planning similar workshops with LERCs and other stakeholders soon.

Details of the Review and all highlight reports and approved papers are shared publicly (see https://nbn.org.uk/about-us/where-we-are/in-scotland/the-SBIF-review/). Follow @sb_info_forum on Twitter for informal news on **#SBIFReview**.

Overview

Our vision for the Review is that it determines the optimum infrastructure for biological recording in Scotland, an infrastructure that in turn will attract the necessary belief, commitment and investment by stakeholders to be sustainable and successful in fulfilling the original vision of SBIF:

> *High quality species and habitat data will be collected and managed through a sustainable, co-ordinated and integrated local and national framework of organisations, partnerships and initiatives. These data will be available to ensure that Scotland's biodiversity, ecosystems and people benefit.*

The Review will do this in such a way as to be cohesive across Scotland with support from all stakeholders and the willingness and energy to then make the transitions necessary to implement the new infrastructure by 2020.

Our objectives are:

- To build the energy and confidence of key stakeholders in the potential for an improved infrastructure that delivers the original vision of SBIF (above).
- To establish a register of all operational recording schemes and their operators so that data flows in Scotland are well-understood.
- To establish what funding and other income sources sustain the current infrastructure and what sources may continue to be available, or become available, in future.
- To hold stakeholder interviews to gain their current perspectives and to consult stakeholders on the infrastructure that they and their sector would need to meet their requirements.
- To run stakeholder workshops to identify the options for how these needs could best be fulfilled centrally, nationally and locally, and to evaluate these options in order to identify the preferred one(s).
- To identify where improved use of technology can help reduce duplication of effort and increase the efficiency of the biological recording infrastructure (so that data are made available for use and re-use).
- To identify what transition arrangements would be necessary to implement the preferred option(s).

Stages and Milestones

	STAGE/MILESTONE	DUE/DONE	STATUS	NOTES/RISKS/ISSUES
	STAGE 1: Set up the Working Group and complete planning for the Review (August 2016)			
	Paper 1 (Brief for the Review) approved	05 September 2016	*Complete*	
	Paper 2 (high level plan for Stage 2) approved	05 September 2016	*Complete*	
	Working Group meetings established	16 September 2016	*Complete*	
	Logistics confirmed for Stage 2	28 February 2017	*Complete*	
	STAGE 2: Gather perspectives, requirements and other information from key stakeholders (September 2016 to July 2017)			
	Paper 2 (high level plan for Stage 2) approved	30 November 2016	*Complete*	
	Questionnaire design completed	28 February 2017	*Complete*	
	Interviews with Stage 2 consultees completed	10 March 2017	*Complete*	
	Background data gathering completed	15 May 2017	*Complete*	
	Logistics confirmed for Stage 3	21 June 2017	*Complete*	
	Analysis of questionnaire + interviews completed	20 August 2017	*Complete*	
	Paper 3 (high level business case) completed	4 December 2017	*Complete*	
	STAGE 3: Hold workshops to find and evaluate options at central, national and local levels (July 2017 to March 2018)			
	Paper 2 (high level plan for Stage 3) approved	21 June 2017	*Complete*	
	Workshops with Stage 3 consultees completed	15 December 2017	*Complete*	
	Paper 3 (detailed business case) approved	15 September 2018	*Complete*	
	STAGE 4: Issue recommendations and plan their implementation (June/July 2018 to March 2019)			
	Paper 4 (Review Recommendations) approved	15 September 2018	*Complete*	Published on 14 November 2018
	Paper 5 (Advocacy Plan) approved	28 January 2019	*Complete*	Now maintained as live plan
	Review lessons learned from doing the Review	17 March 2020	*Complete*	Completed at SBIF Advisory Group meeting
✅	Scottish Government response to the Recommendations	19 December 2020	In progress	Programme proposal submitted to SG
✅	Paper 6 (Implementation Plan) approved	2020?	In progress	Implementation options will entail consultation with affected parties
	STAGE 5: Support implementation of recommendations and monitor progress (April 2019 onwards)			
✅	Monitor implementation against key milestones	2020-2025?		Milestones and monitoring to be described in Paper 6
✅	Paper 7 (progress report) approved	2020-2025?		Subject to implementation options being approved and progressed
✅	Paper 7 (progress report) updated	2020-2025?		Subject to implementation options being approved and progressed
✅	Paper 8 (outcomes) approved	2025?		A review of outcomes will follow once implementation is complete
✅	Paper 8 (outcomes) updated	2025-2035?		Outcomes will be tracked for ten years beyond implementation
	✅ on track ❓ SBIF Working Group attention needed 🔴 SBIF Advisory Group intervention needed			

Activities

COMPLETED THIS QUARTER	• Thanked Ed Mackey for all of his input and energy and wished him a great retirement • Submitted the SBIF Review Investment Programme Proposal "Investing in Nature: Evidence' to Scottish Government on 19 December • Presented to Glasgow Natural History Society 8th October • Provided update to the Fife Nature Record Centre Steering Group on 12th September • Presented evidence to the ECCLR Committee on 17th September • Provided an update for the ALERC Board of Directors on 26th September • SBIF Advisory Group meeting 7th November and 17th March • Hosted a stand and presented at NBN Conference on 13th and 14th November • Presented at the Scottish Biodiversity Science Conference on 18th November • Attended the 2nd DNA Hub Meeting at RBGE on 19th November • Presented evidence to the RECC Committee on 27th November • Presented to the TWIC Autumn Conference 30th November • Provided written update for BRISC newsletter • Supported development of SEFARI fellowship with Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA): Innovative Environmental Monitoring • Formally closed down the SBIF Review Project and completed its post-project review • Continued engagement with SNH to develop and secure 20/21 funding for the SBIF Development Officer post (six months part time July-November 2020) • Responded to NBN Strategy 2020 Review process • Attended and presented at the eNGO webinar hosted by Scottish Wildlife Trust • Met with the Scottish LERCs • Developed Benefit Identification workshop and materials • Facilitated Benefit Identification workshop for SNH and developed associated outputs • Provided update to Rare Breeding Bird Panel • Inputted into Cabinet Office GeoSpatial Commission Species Data Project documentation • Interviewed by JNCC as part of their review of biodiversity data use/needs • Met with SEFARI Fellow to provide background to SBIF Review and future aspirations • Approached DEFRA to consider how SBIF Review recommendations can inform Green Recovery opportunities
NOT DONE THIS QUARTER	• None
TO DO NEXT QUARTER	• Focus on fulfilling Stage 4 of the SBIF Review work programme • Work with SNH and LERCs to consider approach to aligning SNH service needs and LERC service provision • Liaise with SNH to inform the development of relevant projects in the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy • Continue to support SEFARI Fellowship • Arrange workshop with LERC community • Arrange workshop with commercial sector community • Arrange workshop with SBIF Advisory Group • Update SBIF pages on NBN website • Continue to engage with the SBIF community • Continue to engage with the Cabinet Office/Geospatial Commission • Liaise with DEFRA to facilitate Green Recovery opportunities

Key Documents

The documents below will be available via https://nbn.org.uk/about-us/where-we-are/in-scotland/review/ once each one is approved by the SBIF Advisory Group as the Review progresses:

DOCUMENT	TITLE	STATUS
Paper 1 Brief	Initiating a Review of the Biological Recording Infrastructure in Scotland (formation of, and Terms of Reference and Brief for, a Working Group to undertake this Review)	APPROVED (at 05/09/2016 SBIFAG meeting)
Paper 2 Plan	Detailed plan for the Review of the Biological Recording Infrastructure in Scotland (success criteria, activity plans, and timeline)	APPROVED (for Stage 2)
Paper 3(a) High level Business Case	The High-Level Business Case for a Review of the Biological Recording Infrastructure in Scotland (reporting on the perspectives and requirements of each Sector and the need for change)	DRAFT COMPLETED for early workshops but focus now transferred to the Detailed Business Case
Paper 3(b) Detailed Business Case	The Detailed Business Case for Changes to the Biological Recording Infrastructure in Scotland (reporting on the options evaluated and our preferred option)	APPROVED (by email); including final recommendations
Paper 4 Final Report and Recommendations	Recommendations from the Review of the Biological Recording Infrastructure in Scotland (recommendations and implementation roadmap)	COMPLETE Published on 14 November 2018
Paper 5 Advocacy Plan	Advocacy Plan for our preferred option for a Biological Recording Infrastructure in Scotland (reporting on the advocacy arrangements needed and the potential decision-making process within Scottish Government)	APPROVED on 28th January 2019
Paper 6 Implementation Plan	Implementation Plan for our preferred option for a Biological Recording Infrastructure in Scotland (reporting on the transition arrangements needed and potential roadmap for their implementation)	In progress
Paper 7 Progress Reporting	Progress reporting for the Review of the Biological Recording Infrastructure in Scotland (implementation of our recommendations)	Not started
Paper 8 Outcomes	Outcomes and benefits from our Review of the Biological Recording Infrastructure in Scotland (successes and lessons learned)	Not started

Key Diagrams and Leaflets

The diagrams and leaflets below are available via https://nbn.org.uk/about-us/where-we-are/in-scotland/the-sbif-review/ and are listed here for ease of reference:

- **SBIF Value Model** (the 'windmill') illustrating the components of our biological recording infrastructure that provide value for various communities (decision-makers, biological recorders, data users and service providers).
- **SBIF Leaflet**: Introducing the SBIF Review of the Biological Recording Infrastructure in Scotland.
- **SBIF Review Workshop Outputs** documenting the key messages from each workshop.
- **SBIF Review Literature Review Outputs** documenting the key findings with an archive of collated sources.
- **SBIF Review Interview Findings** documenting the results of key stakeholder interviews.
- **SBIF Review Questionnaire Findings** documenting the results of the questionnaire.
- **SBIF Review Benefit Dependency Network Diagram** mapping benefit dependencies.
- **SBIF Review Final Report** documenting the business case and recommendations of the Review.
- **SBIF Review Investment Programme Proposal** documenting a costed five year implementation programme.