

Scottish Biodiversity Information Forum - 17th Advisory Group Meeting,
Monday 24th August 2020
14:00 – 16:00

Attendees: Gill Dowse (SWT); Guy Harewood (Stirling Council); Wilma Harper (NBN Trust); Sarah Henshall (CNPA) [until 14:20]; Jo Judge (NBN); Craig Macadam (Buglife); Scot Mathieson (SEPA) [until 14:30]; Debs Muscat (ALERC); Glenn Roberts (NESBReC); David Roy (BRC); Iain Sime (Nature Scot); Rona Sinclair (Nature Scot); Rachel Tierney (SWT / SBIF); Claire Lacey (CIEEM); Ellen Wilson (RSPB),

Apologies received: Andy Ford (CNPA); Jo Porter (Heriot Watt); Jonathan Willet (BRISC),

Agenda

1) Minutes and matters arising from the last meeting [RT]

Attached: [20190904 SBIF Advisory Group MINUTES_v0.4 (for sign off)], [20200317 SBIF Advisory Group Meeting MINUTES_v0.1] (actions and sign off)

Both sets of minutes were approved for publication on the SBIF pages of the NBN website

COMPLETED AND DISCHARGED

AP AG10-4 CL to advise the name of a possible contact at Marine Scotland – follow up action for RT to meet with Linda Rosborough, SWT Chair

- Discharged. Rona Sinclair (NatureScot) will join the Advisory Group as a marine representative.

AP AG11-3 RT to approach contacts about joining the Advisory Group

AP AG16-1 IS to arrange meeting with SBS contacts by end March

- Ellen Wilson and Rachel Tierney have met with key leads from SBS Project 4 to discuss SBIF's ongoing inclusion and involvement

ONGOING

AP AG09-4 All to advise EW of their SBIF-related activities (for inclusion in quarterly Highlight Reports)

AP AG13-1 RT to draft and circulate a comms plan

- To be written as part of the new project proposal

AP AG15-7 RT to send briefing document to NESBReC

- To be considered and progressed in light of new project proposal

AP AG16-2 SM to support EW and RT to contact SBIF Community

- To be progressed as part of new project proposal and emerging communications plan

AP AG16-3 JJ to report back on funding opportunities

- NBN Trust recruited some volunteer interns over the summer to investigate funders. JJ to pass on details to SBIF of any funding available.

2) Development Officer Update [RT]

- Received NatureScot funding (many thanks to NatureScot for their ongoing support) for a development officer
- Organised and co-facilitated a workshop with NatureScot to explore priority benefits for SNH. Priorities were:

- Benefit 6: Organisations that provide or govern key parts of the infrastructure as a public service have sufficient funding and resource to do so effectively;
- Benefit 2: All data are of known quality, quickly and openly available and easily accessed through a single central data repository;
- Benefit 1: Clear data flows and submission points, with feedback on quality and use
- Supporting Cabinet Office/Geospatial Commission to finalise documentation for bid to undertake review of biological recording, and assess SBIF Recommendations, in an England context.
- Interviewed by JNCC as part of the Statutory Agency Review to evaluate the use of biodiversity data within country nature conservation bodies.
- Planning CIEEM workshop for 29th September with Claire Lacey to meet with data assistances within large environmental consultants
- Contact with DEFRA re. Cabinet Sec for Environment speech, follow up meeting with David Wood planned
- Submitted a response on behalf of SBIF to the ECCLR committee [call for views on the Green Recovery](#)

3) Welcome to Rona Sinclair

Rona Sinclair was welcomed to the SBIF Advisory Group. Rona is working for NatureScot on SBIF related marine issues 2 days per week for the remainder of this financial year to identify any quick wins. She will apply her understanding of marine data and business analysis and build on existing internal and external contacts to take forward a scoping exercise for marine data as an adjunct to the Scottish Biodiversity Information Forum (SBIF) review. This exercise will:

- Consider the original SBIF review and NatureScot's subsequent prioritisation of recommendations and scope the works required to undertake a comparable review for Scottish marine survey data.
- Engage internal and external marine data stakeholders in the scoping exercise. The review should be informed by the new Scottish Marine Science Strategy and proposals to support Scotland's green recovery following Covid-19.
- Respond to ad-hoc SBIF-related marine data enquiries.

4) Facilitating enablers to support SBS Project 4 and a Green Recovery [EW]

A project proposal for the SBS Project 4, framing the SBIF Review in light of the Green Recovery was presented. Five objectives were discussed

- formation of "LERC Scotland" as a governance body and national hub to support provision of services for complete coverage of Scotland
- selection and implementation of a single, shared, supported online system for LERC data management and service provision
- streamlining of data flow and verification through enhanced integration with UKSI, iRecord and NBN Atlas
- design of a new, single framework agreement for NatureScot funding with LERCs and major recording groups
- capability and capacity building for LERC Scotland

There was overall support to progress the proposal and submit it at pace to NatureScot.

Key points of discussion included:

- The approach is a simple way to get things going and build upon. Starting with an umbrella organisation will provide a foundation to develop additional components of the SBIF Vision.

It will demonstrate that there is parity across Scotland to provide access to data and report upon it

- Recognition that a single agreement model has worked well in other contexts (SE Link, ALERC single agreement with EA. This model, providing a single point of contact frees up time to do other work.
- Some concerns re. single shared systems and associated risks. Need to get scoping and questions right at outset and will require a formal tendering process to get the right solution
- Questions around how “LERC Scotland” works as a body (governance and fit with existing bodies). Scotland LERCs would like to speak to Welsh LERCs to understand if the model is the best it can be or if it can be improved upon.
- Some LERCs in Scotland are waiting to hear outcome before doing anything. Need to address their concerns and have dialogue from start even if can't address issues straight away.
- Clarity required on where this sits in relation to NBN Atlas Scotland and other existing infrastructure, it is to address coordinating the data management for the LERCs
- Need to be able to bring data together at different levels - compatibility and building up data layers

Opportunities

- Scottish Biodiversity Strategy will be published in 2022, if can have a skeletal team in place by then this could be an opportunity to make the case that “LERC Scotland” requires further funding
- Opportunity to get political buy-in to the “LERC Scotland” idea/SBIF review is to get it in to the manifestos for the elections in May

Summary

- In right place for starting somewhere
- Need to be clear on scoping and emphasise need for a scoping phase
- Need to support LERCs that are struggling now

Next steps

- **AP AG17-01 Rachel** to arrange meeting with Scottish LERCs and Welsh LERCs
- **AP AG17-02 Rachel and Ellen** to contact LERCs in Scotland for input
- **AP AG17-03 Rachel and Ellen** to circulate developed proposal to Advisory Group for comment

5) Any other business

- Update monitoring in Highlight Report as it evolves
- **AP AG17-04 Rachel** to add a standing agenda item for Rona to update the Advisory Group on marine progress

6) Date of next meeting

- October [to be confirmed]